MONERGISM BOOKS

JOHN OWEN

AN EXPOSITION OF THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS



VOLUME VII

HEBREWS 11:1-13:25

An Exposition of the Epistle to the Hebrews

Hebrews 11:1–13:25



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JOHN OWEN

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CHAPTER 11

THE general nature of this epistle, as unto the kind of writing, is parenetical or hortatory; which is taken from its end and design. And the exhortation proposed is unto constancy and perseverance in the faith of the Lord Jesus Christ and profession of the gospel, against temptations and persecutions. Both these the Hebrews had to conflict withal in their profession; the one from the Judaical church-state itself; the other from the members of it. Their temptations to draw back and forsake their profession, arose from the consideration of the Judaical church-state and Mosaical ordinances of worship, which they were called unto a relinquishment of by the gospel. The divine institution of that state, with its worship; the solemnity of the covenant whereon it was established; the glory of its priesthood, sacrifices, and other divine ordinances (as Rom. 9:4), with their efficacy for acceptance with God; were continually proposed unto them and pressed on them, to allure and draw them off from the gospel. And the trial was very great, after the inconsistency of the two states was made manifest. This gave occasion unto the whole doctrinal part of the epistle, whose exposition, by divine grace and assistance, we have passed through. For therein declaring the nature, use, end, and signification, of all divine institutions under the old testament, and allowing unto them all the glory and efficacy which they could pretend unto, he evidently declares, from the Scripture itself, that the state of the gospel-church, in its high priest, sacrifice, covenant, worship, privileges, and efficacy, is incomparably to be preferred above that of the old testament; yea, that all the excellency and glory of that state, and all that belonged unto it, consisted only in the representation that was made thereby of the greater glory of Christ and the gospel, without which they were of no use, and therefore ruinous or pernicious to be persisted in.

After he hath fixed their minds in the truth, and armed them against the temptations which they were continually exposed unto, the apostle proceeds to the second means whereby their steadiness and constancy in the profession of

the gospel, which he exhorted them unto, was already assaulted, and was yet like to be so with greater force and fury; and this was from the opposition which befell them, and persecutions of all sorts that they did and were like to undergo, for their faith in Christ Jesus, with the profession thereof and observance of the holy worship ordained in the gospel. This they met withal from the obstinate members of the Jewish church, as they did the other from the state of that church itself.

An account hereof the apostle enters upon in the close of the foregoing chapter; and withal declares unto them the only way and means, on their part, whereby they may be preserved and kept constant unto their profession, notwithstanding all the evils that might befall them therein; and this is by faith alone. From their temptations they were delivered by the doctrine of truth; and from the opposition made unto them, by faith in exercise.

But whereas they were things grievous and dreadful that were like to befall them, which would at length probably arise to blood, or the loss of their lives, chap. 12:4, it was necessary to know what this faith is, and what evidence can be produced to prove that it is able to effect this great work of preserving the souls of men in the profession of the truth under bloody and destructive persecutions.

To comply with and give satisfaction on this necessary inquiry, the apostle in this whole chapter diverts to give a description or declaration of faith in general, whence it is meet and suited to produce that effect in the minds of believers; as also, to confirm by instances, that it had formerly, even from the beginning of the world, wrought effects of the same nature, or those which in greatness and glory were parallel thereunto. And hereon he takes advantage, according unto his constant method in this epistle, to make a full transition unto the hortatory part of the epistle, which gives life unto the whole; and which he made provision for, and some entrance into, chap. 10:19, as hath been declared.

And that this is the design of the apostle, is evident beyond contradiction, in the inference which he makes from his whole discourse hereon, with the exhortation he presseth from it, in the beginning of the next chapter, verses 1–3, "Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the

throne of God. For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied, and faint in your minds," etc. This is that which he designed to effect in their mind by his discourse of the nature of faith, and the instances given of its efficacy. The principal way whereby faith worketh in this case, of encountering the difficulties which lie in the way of constancy in profession unto the end, is patience preserving the soul from fainting and weariness. This he had before proposed in the example of Abraham, chap. 6:15; whereof see the exposition.

This being the design of the apostle, the missing of it hath caused sundry contests among expositors and others about the nature of justifying faith, which is not here at all spoken unto. For the apostle treats not in this place of justification, or of faith as justifying, or of its interest in justification; but of its efficacy and operation in them that are justified, with respect unto constancy and perseverance in their profession, notwithstanding the difficulties which they have to conflict withal; in the same way as it is treated of James 2.

The instances which he chooseth out unto this purpose, in a long season and tract of time, even from the beginning of the world unto the end of the church-state under the old testament, about the space of four thousand years, as unto the variety of their seasons, the distinct nature of the duties, and the effects expressed in them, with their influence into his present argument and exhortation, shall, God willing, be considered in our progress.

This only we may observe in general, that it is faith alone which, from the beginning of the world, in all ages, under all dispensations of divine grace, and all alterations in the church-state and worship, hath been the only principle in the church of living unto God, of obtaining the promises, of inheriting life eternal; and doth continue so to be unto the consummation of all things. For the recording here of what it hath done, is only to evidence what yet it will continue to do. Faith can do all things that belong unto the life of God; and without it nothing can be done. Spiritual life is by faith, Gal. 2:20; and victory, 1 John 5:4; and perseverance, 1 Pet. 1:5; and salvation, Eph. 2:8, 1 Pet. 1:9: and so they were from the beginning.

Hebrews 11: 1

The first verse gives such a description of the nature of faith, as evidenceth its fitness and meetness unto the effecting of the great work assigned unto it, namely, the preservation of believers in the profession of the gospel with constancy and perseverance.

Ver. 1.—Ἔστι δὲ πίστις ἐλπιζομένων ὑπόστασις, πραγμάτων ἔλεγχος οὐ βλεπομένων.

The Vulgar translation placeth the comma after πραγμάτων; "sperandarum substantia rerum," excluding "rerum" from the last clause. Both ἐλπιζομένων and βλεπομένων being of the neuter gender, may either of them agree with πραγμάτων, and the other be used absolutely. "Sperandorum;" that is, "quae sperantur."

Ὑπόστασις. "Substantia," Vulg. Lat. So we, "the substance;" Beza, "illud quo subsistunt;" others, "id quo extant;" that whereby things hoped for exist or subsist. Syr., פָּיְסָא עַל אִילֵּין דְּאִיתַיְהִין בְּסַבְרָא אֵיךְ הָו דַּהֲוֵי לְחֵין בְּסוּעָרְנָא, "a persuasion of the things that are in hope, as if they were unto them in effect;" which goes a great way towards the true exposition of the words.

Ἔλεγχος. Vulg. Lat., "argumentum illud quod demonstrat;" or "quae demonstrat;" "that which doth evidently prove or declare." Syr., גְּלְיָנָא, "the revelation of things that are not seen."

Ὑπόστασις is a word not used in the Scripture, but 2 Cor. 9:4, 11:17, and in this epistle, wherein it three times occurs. In the first it is applied to express a distinct manner of subsistence in the divine nature, chap. 1:3; in the second, a firm persuasion of the truth, supporting our souls in the profession of it, chap. 3:14. See the exposition of those places. Here we render it substance. More properly it is a real subsistence: Τῶν ἐν ἀέρι φαντασμάτων, τὰ μέν ἐστι κατ᾽ ἔμφασιν, τὰ δὲ καθ᾽ ὑπόστασιν, Aristot. de Mundo;—"Of the things that are seen in the air, some have only an appearance, others have the real subsistence" of nature; are really subsistent, in contradiction unto appearing phantasms. As it is applied to signify a quality in the minds of men, it denotes confidence, or presence of mind without fear, as in the places above, 2 Cor. 9:4, 11:17. Polybius of Cocles, Οὐχ οὕτω τὴν δύναμιν, ὡς τὴν ὑπόστασιν αὐτοῦ, etc.;—"They wondered not so much at his strength, as his boldness, courage, confidence." The first sense is proper to this place; whence it is rendered by many, "that whereby they exist." And the sense of the place is well expressed in the Greek scholiast: Ἐπειδὴ γὰρ τὰ ἐν ἐλπίσιν ἀνυπόστατά ἐστιν ὡς τέως μὴ παρόντα, ἡ πίστις οὐσία τις αὐτῶν καὶ ὑπόστασις γίνεται, εἶναι αὐτὰ και παρεῖναι τρόπον τινὰ παρασκευάζουσα·

—"Whereas things that are in hope only have no subsistence of their own, as being not present; faith becomes the subsistence of them, making them to be present after a certain manner."

I shall retain in the translation the word "substance," as it is opposed unto that which hath no real being or subsistence, but is only an appearance of things.

Ἔλεγχος is usually a "conviction" accompanied with a reproof; "redargutio:" and so the verb is commonly used in the New Testament; as the noun also: Matt. 18:15; Luke 3:19; John 3:20, 8:46, 16:8; 1 Cor. 14:24; Eph. 5:11, 13; 1 Tim. 5:20; Tit. 1:9, 13; 2 Tim. 3:16. Sometimes it is taken absolutely, as ἀπόδειξις, a "demonstration," a convincing, undeniable proof and evidence: that which makes evident. Syr., "the revelation;" the way or means whereby they are made known.

Ver. 1.—Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

Δέ. First, The respect and connection of these words unto the preceding discourse is in the particle δέ, which we render "now:" for it is not adversative or exceptive in this place, as it is usually, but illative, denoting the introduction of a further confirmation of what was before declared: 'That is, faith will do and effect what is ascribed unto it, in the preservation of your souls in the life of God, and constancy in profession; for "it is the substance," etc.' The observation of the design of the apostle dischargeth all the disputes of expositors on this place about the nature and definition of faith, seeing he describes only one property of it, with respect unto a peculiar end, as was said before.

Πίστις. Secondly, The subject spoken of is "faith," that faith whereby the just doth live; that is, faith divine, supernatural, justifying, and saving,—the faith of God's elect, the faith that is not of ourselves, that is of the operation of God, wherewith all true believers are endowed from above. It is therefore justifying faith that the apostle here speaks concerning; but he speaks not of it as justifying, but as it is effectually useful in our whole life unto God, especially as unto constancy and perseverance in profession.

Thirdly, Unto this faith two things are ascribed: 1. That it is "the substance of things hoped for." 2. That it is "the evidence of things not seen." And,—

1. We must first inquire what are these things; and then what are the acts of faith with respect unto them.

These things for the substance of them are the same, the same πράγματα; but they are proposed under various considerations. For, that they may be useful unto us as they are hoped for, they are to have a present subsistence given unto them; as they are unseen, they are to be made evident: both which are done by faith.

Ἐλπιζομένων. (1.) "Things hoped for," in general, are things good, promised, future, expected on unfailing grounds. The things, therefore, here intended as "hoped for," are all the things that are divinely promised unto them that believe,—all things of present grace and future glory. For even the things of present grace are the objects of hope: [1.] With respect unto the degrees and measures of our participation of them. Believers live in the hope of increase of grace, because it is promised. [2.] Absolutely, as unto the grace of perseverance in grace, which is future until its full accomplishment. As unto the things of future glory, see what hath been discoursed on chap. 6:19, 20, 8:5.

Οὐ βλεπομένων. All these things, as they are promised, and so far as they are so, are the objects of our hope. And that the good things of the promises are the things here intended, the apostle declares in his ensuing discourse, where he makes the end and effect of the faith which he doth so commend to be the enjoyment of the promises. Hope in God for these things, to be received in their appointed season, is the great support of believers under all their trials, in the whole course of their profession, temptations, obedience, and sufferings. "We are saved by hope," Rom. 8:24. But yet I will not say that "things hoped for" and "things unseen" are absolutely the same; so as that there should be nothing hoped for but what is unseen, which is true; nor any thing unseen but what is hoped for, which is not so: for there are things which are the objects of faith which are unseen and yet not hoped for,—such is the creation of the world, wherein the apostle gives an instance in the first place. But generally they are things of the same nature that are intended, whereunto faith gives present subsistence as they are real, and evidence as they are true.

But still these things as hoped for are future, not yet in themselves enjoyed; and so, although hope comprises in it trust, confidence, and an assured expectation, giving great supportment unto the soul, yet the influence of things hoped for into our comfort and stability is weakened somewhat by their absence and distance.

Ὑπόστασις. This is that which faith supplies; it gives those things hoped for, and as they are hoped for, a real subsistence in the minds and souls of them that do believe: and this is the sense of the words. Some would have ὑπόστασις in this place to be "confidence in expectation;" which is hope, and not faith. Some render it the "principle," or foundation; which neither expresseth the sense of the word nor reacheth the scope of the place. But this sense of it is that which both the best translators and the ancient expositors give countenance unto: "Illud ex quo subsistunt, extant." Faith is that whereby they do subsist. And where do they so subsist as if they were actually in effect, whilst they are yet hoped for? "In them," saith the Syriac translation; that is, in them that do believe. "Faith is the essence of these things, and their subsistence, causing them to be, and to be present, because it believes them," saith Oecumenius. And Theophylact to the same purpose, "Faith is the essence of those things which yet are not; the subsistence of those which in themselves do not yet subsist." And yet more plainly in the scholiast before recited: or, it is the substance or subsistence of those things, that is, metonymically or instrumentally, in that it is the cause and means giving them a subsistence. But how this is done hath not been declared. This, therefore, is that which we must briefly inquire into.

(2.) There are several things whereby faith gives a present subsistence unto things future, and so hoped for:—

[1.] By mixing itself with the promises wherein they are contained. Divine promises do not only declare the good things promised,—namely, that there are such things which God will bestow on believers,—but they contain them by virtue of divine institution. Hence are they called "the breasts of consolations," Isa. 66:11, as those which contain the refreshment which they exhibit and convey. They are the treasury wherein God hath laid them up. Hence to "receive a promise," is to receive the things promised, which are contained in it, and exhibited by it, 2 Cor. 5:1; 2 Pet. 1:4. Now faith mixeth and incorporated itself with the word of promise, Heb. 4:2. See the exposition of it. Hereby what is in the word it makes its own, and so the things themselves believed are enjoyed; which is their subsistence in us.

[2.] By giving unto the soul a taste of their goodness, yea, making them the food thereof; which they cannot be unless they are really present unto it. We do by it, not only "taste that the Lord is gracious," 1 Pet. 2:3,—that is, have an experience of the grace of God in the sweetness and goodness of the things he hath promised and doth bestow,—but the word itself is the meat, the food, the

milk and strong meat of believers; because it doth really exhibit unto their faith the goodness, sweetness, and nourishing virtue of spiritual things. They feed on them, and they incorporate with them; which is their present subsistence.

[3.] It gives an experience of their power, as unto all the ends which they are promised for. Their use and end in general is to change and transform the whole soul into the image of God, by a conformity unto Jesus Christ, the first-born. This we lost by sin, and this the good things of the promise do restore us unto, Eph. 4:20–24. It is not truth merely as truth, but truth as conveying the things contained in it into the soul, that is powerfully operative unto this end. Truth, faith, and grace, being all united in one living, operative principle in the soul, give the things hoped for a subsistence therein. This is an eminent way of faith's giving a subsistence unto things hoped for, in the souls of believers. Where this is not, they are unto men as clouds afar off, which yield them no refreshing showers. Expectations of things hoped for, when they are not in this power and efficacy brought by faith into the soul, are ruinous self-deceivings. To have a subsistence in us, is to abide in us in their power and efficacy unto all the ends of our spiritual life. See Eph. 3:16–19.

[4.] It really communicates unto us, or we do receive by it, the first-fruits of them all. They are present and do subsist, even the greatest, most glorious and heavenly of them, in believers, in their first-fruits. These first-fruits are the Spirit as a Spirit of grace, sanctification, supplication, and consolation, Rom. 8:23. For he is the seal, the earnest, and the pledge, of present grace and future glory, of all the good things hoped for, 2 Cor. 1:22. This Spirit we receive by faith. The world cannot receive him, John 14:17; the law could not give him, Gal. 3:2. And wherever he is, there is an ὑπόστασις, a present subsistence of all things hoped for, namely, in their beginning, assurance, and benefit.

[5.] It doth it by giving a representation of their beauty and glory unto the minds of them that believe, whereby they behold them as if they were present. So Abraham by faith saw the day of Christ, and rejoiced; and the saints under the old testament saw the King in his beauty, 2 Cor. 3:18, 4:6.

In these ways, and by these means, "faith is the substance of things hoped for;" and,—

Obs. I. No faith will carry us through the difficulties of our profession, from oppositions within and without, giving us constancy and perseverance therein unto the end, but that only which gives the good things hoped for a real subsistence in our minds and souls.—But when, by mixing itself with the

promise, which is the foundation of hope, (for to hope for any thing but what is promised, is to deceive ourselves), it gives us a taste of their goodness, an experience of their power, the inhabitation of their first-fruits, and a view of their glory, it will infallibly effect this blessed end.

2. It is said in the description of this faith, that it is "the evidence of things not seen." And we must inquire, (1.) What are the things that are not seen; (2.) How faith is the evidence of them; (3.) How it conduceth, in its being so, unto patience, constancy, and perseverance in profession.

Οὐ βλεπομένων. (1.) By "things not seen," the apostle intends all those things which are not objected or proposed unto our outward senses, which may and ought to have an influence into our constancy and perseverance in profession. Now, these are God himself, the holy properties of his nature, the person of Christ, and of the Holy Spirit, all spiritual, heavenly, and eternal things that are promised, and not yet actually enjoyed. All these things are either absolutely invisible unto sense and reason, or at least so far, and under those considerations whereby they may have an influence into our profession. Every thing is invisible which nothing but faith can make use of and improve unto this end, 1 Cor. 2:9–12.

These invisible things are of three sorts: [1.] Such as are absolutely so in their own nature, as God himself, with his eternal power and Godhead, or the properties of his nature, Rom. 1:20. [2.] Such as are so in their causes; such is the fabric of heaven and earth, as the apostle declares, Heb. 11:3. [3.] Such as are so on the account of their distance from us in time and place; such are all the future glories of heaven, 2 Cor. 4:18.

Obs. II. The peculiar specifical nature of faith, whereby it is differenced from all other powers, acts, and graces in the mind, lies in this, that it makes a life on things invisible. It is not only conversant about them, but mixeth itself with them, making them the spiritual nourishment of the soul, 2 Cor. 4:16–18. And,

—

Obs. III. The glory of our religion is, that it depends on, and is resolved into invisible things. They are far more excellent and glorious than any thing that sense can behold or reason discover, 1 Cor. 2:9.

Ἔλεγχος. (2.) Of these invisible things, as they have an influence into our profession, faith is said to be the ἔλεγχος, the "evidence," the "demonstration," that which demonstrates; the "revelation." Properly, it is such a proof or demonstration of any thing as carries with it an answer unto and a confutation

of all objections unto the contrary: a convincing evidence, plainly reproving and refuting all things that pretend against the truth so evidenced. So it is sometimes used for a reproof, sometimes for a conviction, sometimes for an evident demonstration. See the use of the verb to this purpose, Matt. 18:15; Luke 3:19; John 3:20, 8:9, 16:8; 1 Cor. 14:24; Eph. 5:13; Tit. 1:9; James 2:9: and of the noun, 2 Tim. 3:16.

Obs. IV. There are great objections apt to lie against invisible things, when they are externally revealed.—Man would desirously live the life of sense, or at least believe no more than what he can have a scientifical demonstration of. But by these means we cannot have an evidence of invisible things; at best not such as may have an influence into our Christian profession. This is done by faith alone. We may have apprehensions of sundry invisible things by reason and the light of nature, as the apostle declares, Rom. 1; but we cannot have such an evidence of them as shall have the properties of the ἔλεγχος here intended. It will not reprove and silence the objections of unbelief against them; it will not influence our souls into patient continuance in well-doing. Now, faith is not the evidence and demonstration of these things unto all, which the Scripture alone is; but it is an evidence in and unto them that do believe,—they have this evidence of them in themselves. For,—

[1.] Faith is that gracious power of the mind whereby it firmly assents unto divine revelation upon the sole authority of God, the revealer, as the first essential truth, and fountain of all truth. It is unto faith that the revelation of these invisible things is made; which it mixeth and incorporates itself withal, whereby it gives an evidence unto them. Hence the Syriac translation renders the word by "revelation," ascribing that unto the act which is the property of the object. This assent of faith is accompanied with a satisfactory evidence of the things themselves. See our discourse of the Divine Original and Authority of the Scriptures.

[2.] It is by faith that all objections against them, their being and reality, are answered and refuted; which is required unto an ἔλεγχος. Many such there are, over all which faith is victorious, Eph. 6:16. All the temptations of Satan, especially such as are called his "fiery darts," consist in objections against invisible things; either as unto their being, or as unto our interest in them. All the actings of unbelief in us are to the same purpose. To reprove and silence them is the work of faith alone; and such a work it is as without which we can maintain our spiritual life neither in its power within nor its profession without.

[3.] Faith brings into the soul an experience of their power and efficacy, whereby it is cast into the mould of them, or made conformable unto them, Rom. 6:17; Eph. 4:21–23. This gives an assurance unto the mind, though not of the same nature, yet more excellent than that of any scientific demonstration.

(3.) Faith, in its being thus "the evidence of things not seen," is the great means of the preservation of believers in constant, patient profession of the gospel, against all opposition, and under the fiercest persecutions; which is the thing the apostle aims to demonstrate. For,—

[1.] It plainly discovers, that the worst of what we can undergo in this world, for the profession of the gospel, bears no proportion unto the excellency and glory of those invisible things which it gives us an interest in and a participation of. So the apostle argues, Rom. 8:18; 2 Cor. 4:16–18.

[2.] It brings in such a present sense of their goodness, power, and efficacy, that not only relieves and refresheth the soul under all its sufferings, but makes it joyful in them, and victorious over them, Rom. 5:3–5, 8:34–37; 1 Pet. 1:6–8.

[3.] It gives an assurance hereby of the greatness and glory of the eternal reward; which is the greatest encouragement unto constancy in believing, 1 Pet. 4:12, 13.

In this description of faith, the apostle hath laid an assured foundation of his main position, concerning the cause and means of constancy in profession under trouble and persecution; with a discovery of the nature and end of the ensuing instances, with their suitableness unto his purpose. And we may observe in general, that,—

Obs. V. It is faith alone that takes believers out of this world whilst they are in it, that exalts them above it whilst they are under its rage; that enables them to live upon things future and invisible, giving such a real subsistence unto their power in them, and victorious evidence of their reality and truth in themselves, as secures them from fainting under all oppositions, temptations, and persecutions whatever.

Hebrews 11: 2

That the description which he hath given of faith, and the efficacy which he hath assigned thereunto, are true, and to be relied on, the apostle proves by the effects which, as such, it hath had in those of old in whom it was.

Ver. 2.—Ἐν ταύτῃ γὰρ ἐμαρτυρήθησαν οἱ πρεσβύτεροι.

Ἐν ταύτῃ, "in hâc," "de hâc," "ob hanc," "ob eam;" all to the same purpose.

Ἐμαρτυρήθησαν, "testimonium consequuti," "adepti;" "testimonio ornati." Syr., בְּהָדָא הֲוָת סָהֲדוּתָא עַל קַשִׁישֵׁא, "And hereof" (or of this faith) "there is extant a testimony concerning the ancients;" which somewhat changeth the sense.

Πρεσβύτεροι, "seniores," "majores," "antiqui." Syr., "those of ancient times;" properly, not הַזְקֵנִים but הַקַּדְמֵנִים, "priores," those of old.

Μαρτυρέω is "to testify," "to bear witness," absolutely; but it is generally used only in the better sense, "to give a good testimony," "to approve by testimony," "to adorn with a good testimony." So is the passive, μαρτυρέομαι, used: which I observe only because the word is here used absolutely, ἐμαρτυρήθησαν, "were witnessed unto;" which we render, "obtained a good report." So is it also used, Acts 6:3, ἄνδρας μαρτυρουμένους, "men witnessed unto," "men of good report;" and chap. 10:22, μαρτυρούμενοι ὑπὸ ὅλου τοῦ ἔθνους, "of good report;" and so in other places.

"Were testified unto:" wherein and for what is not expressed; that we shall immediately inquire into. "There is a testimony extant concerning their faith," as the Syriac reads it, doth not reach the sense of the place; for it intends not so much what good testimony they had, as the way whereby they obtained it.

Ἐν ταύτῃ for διὰ ταυτῆς, as is usual; "by it," through it as the means and instrumental cause of it. Our Rhemists render the words somewhat in an uncouth manner, "for in it the old men obtained testimony;" as if it were on purpose to obscure the text.

Ver. 2.—For by it the elders obtained a good report: [or, were well testified unto.]

Γάρ. The coherence of the words with the foregoing is expressed in the conjunctive particle γάρ, "for:" and it declares that a proof is tendered, by way of instance, of what was before asserted. 'The nature and efficacy of faith is such as I have described; "for by it the elders," etc.' This they could no way have done, but by that faith whereof these are the properties.

Obs. I. Instances or examples are the most powerful confirmations of practical truths.

For the exposition of the words, it must be declared, 1. Who were the elders intended. 2. How they were testified unto, or from whom they obtained this testimony. 3. What it was that was testified concerning them. 4. On what account they had this testimony.

Οἱ πρεσβύτεροι. 1. Who these "elders" were is put beyond dispute by the ensuing discourse. All true believers from the foundation of the world, or the giving of the first promise, unto the end of the dispensation of the old testament, are intended; for in all sorts of them he giveth particular instances, from Abel unto those who suffered the last persecution that the church of the Jews underwent for religion, verses 36–38. What befell them afterward was judgment and punishment for sin, not persecution for religion. All these, by one general name, he calleth "the elders," comprising all that went before them. 'Thus was it constantly with all believers from the beginning of the world,—the elders, those who lived before us, in ancient times.'

Ἐμαρτυρήθησαν. 2. This testimony was given unto them in the Scripture; that is, it is so in particular of many of them, and of the rest in the general rules of it. It is the Holy Spirit in the Scripture that gives them this good testimony; for thereunto doth the apostle appeal for the proof of his assertion. In and from the world things were otherwise with them; none so defamed, so reproached, so reviled as they were. If they had had such a good report in the world, their example would not have been of use unto the apostle's design; for he applies it unto them who were made a "gazing-stock, both by reproaches and afflictions," chap. 10:33; and so it was with many of them, who yet obtained this testimony. They "had trial of cruel mockings," etc., verses 36, 37.

Obs. II. They who have a good testimony from God shall never want reproaches from the world.

3. What was so testified of them is expressly declared afterwards; and this is, that they "pleased God," or were accepted with him. The Holy Ghost in Scripture gives testimony unto them, that they pleased God, that they were righteous, that they were justified in the sight of God, verses 4–6, etc.

Ἐν ταύτῃ. 4. That whereon this testimony was founded, is their "faith." In, by, or through their believing it was, that they obtained this report. Many other great and excellent things, some heroic actions, some deep sufferings, are ascribed unto them, but their obtaining this testimony is assigned to faith alone; as for other reasons, so because all those other things were fruits of their faith, whose acceptance with God depended thereon. And we may observe,—

Obs. III. It is faith alone which from the beginning of the world (or from the giving of the first promise) was the means and way of obtaining acceptance with God.—There hath been great variety in the revelations of the object of this faith. The faith of some, as of Noah and some others, was principally and

signally exercised on especial objects, as we shall see in our progress; but it is faith of the same nature and kind in all from first to last that gives acceptance with God. And all the promises of God, as branches of the first promise, are in general the formal object of it; that is, Christ in them, without faith in whom none was ever accepted with God, as we shall see.

Obs. IV. The faith of true believers from the beginning of the world was fixed on things future, hoped for, and invisible; that is, eternal life and glory in an especial manner.—That was the faith whereby they "obtained a good report," as the apostle here testifies. So vain is the imagination of them who affirm that all the promises under the old testament respected only things temporal; so making the whole church to have been Sadducees. The contrary is here expressly affirmed by the apostle.

Obs. V. That faith whereby men please God acts itself in a fixed contemplation on things future and invisible, from whence it derives encouragement and strength to endure and abide firm in profession against all oppositions and persecutions.

Obs. VI. However men may be despised, vilified, and reproached in the world, yet if they have faith, if they are true believers, they are accepted with God, and he will give them a good report.

Hebrews 11: 3

He enters on the confirmation and exemplification of his proposition by instances; first from an especial object of faith, and then proceeds unto the actings of it in them who by virtue of it did actually and really believe. The former he expresseth in this verse.

Ver. 3.—Πίστει νοοῦμεν κατηρτίσθαι τοὺς αἰῶνας ῥήματι Θεοῦ, εἰς τὸ μὴ ἐκ φαινομένων τὰ βλεπόμενα γεγονέναι.

Πίστει. Syr., בְּהַיְמָנוּתָא, "by faith." So all others, "per fidem," "by faith;" for being put absolutely, it denotes the instrumental cause.

Νοοῦμεν, "intelligimus," "we understand." Νοέω is principally in the first place "to consider," to agitate any thing in the mind; and consequently "to understand," which is the end of that consideration.

Κατηρτίσθαι. Syr., דְּאִתְתַּקַנוּ, "were ordained, disposed, ordered." Vulg. Lat., "aptata;" which the Rhemists render by "framed:" but "aptata" is more significant. Others, "aedificata, constructa, ornata, praeparata, creata, condita;" "built, made, adorned, prepared, created." For the word signifies "so to make, or

be made, as to be prepared, orderly disposed, and adorned." The active is "to finish, to complete, to make a thing every way perfect." In the New Testament it is most generally used for "to order, prepare, dispose, to set in order," Matt. 4:21, 21:16; Luke 6:40; Rom. 9:22; 1 Cor. 1:10; Gal. 6:1; 1 Thess. 3:10. And it is the word used by our apostle to express the providing, making, or preparation of the body of Christ, Heb. 10:5. See the exposition of that place.

Τοὺς αἰῶνας, "secula," "seculum," "mundum;" "the worlds," or "world."

Εἰς τὸ μὴ ἐκ φαινομένων. The Syriac, by transposing the words of this latter clause of the verse, makes the sense more plain, "that the things which are seen were," or "arose from things that are not seen." Vulg. Lat., "ut ex invisibilibus visibilia fierent." "That of invisible things visible things might be made," Rhem., improperly; γεγονέναι is not "might be made," but "were made;" and εἰς τό is as much as ὥστε, "so that." The Arabic and Ethiopic wholly forsake the text, or sense of the words. Some render the words as if they were, εἰς τὸ ἐκ μὴ φαινομένων, by a transposition of the negative particle μή; and then the negative is to be referred unto φαινομένων, and not to γεγονέναι. In the latter way the sense is, as rendered in our translation, "the things that are seen were not made of the things that appear;" in the other it is, "the things that are seen were made of things that do not appear:" which may have an understanding coincident with the other.

Τὰ βλεπόμενα, "quae cernimus," "quae cernuntur;" "which we see," "which are seen."

Ver. 3.—By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God; so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.

In this first instance of the power and efficacy of faith, the apostle hath respect unto the second clause of his general description of it, "the evidence of things not seen." For although this world, and the things contained in it, are visible, and are here said to be seen, yet the original framing and making of them hath a principal place among things not seen. And to prove that faith hath a respect unto all unseen things as unseen, he gives an instance in that which was so long past as the creation of the world; all his other instances declare its efficacy in the prospect of unseen things that are future.

Πίστει. 1. That which is here ascribed unto faith is, that it is the instrumental cause of it: "By faith." And where faith is spoken of as the instrumental cause of any thing, it always takes in or includes its object as the principal cause of the same thing. So where it is said that we are "justified by faith," it includes Christ

and his righteousness as the principal cause of our justification; faith being only the instrument whereby we apprehend it. And here, where it is said that "by faith we understand that the worlds were framed," it includes its object, namely, the divine revelation that is made thereof in the word of God. For there is no other way for faith to instruct us herein, or give us an understanding of it, but by its assent unto divine revelation. The revelation of it being made, faith is the only way and means whereby we understand it, and assent unto it. "By faith we understand;" that is, by faith we assent unto the divine revelation of it.

The apostle lays here a good foundation of all his ensuing assertions: for if by faith we are assured of the creation of the world out of nothing, which is contrary to the most received principle of natural reason, "Ex nihilo nihil fit,"—"Nothing comes of nothing,"—it will bear us out in the belief of other things that seem impossible unto reason, if so be they are revealed. In particular, faith well fixed on the original of all things as made out of nothing, will bear us out in the belief of the final restitution of our bodies at the resurrection, which the apostle instanceth in as unto some of his worthies.

2. That which is ascribed unto faith subjectively, or unto its operation in our minds, is, that "by it we understand." Upon a due consideration of what is proposed in divine revelation concerning this matter, we come not only to assent unto it as true, but to have a due comprehension of it in its cause, so as that we may be said to understand it. Wherefore, "understanding" here is not opposed only unto an utter nescience or ignorance hereof, but also unto that dark and confused apprehension of the creation of the world which some by the light of reason attained unto.

Obs. I. Those who firmly assent unto divine revelation, do understand the creation of the world, as to its truth, its season, its cause, its manner, and end.—Others do only think about it unsteadily and uncertainly. It was never determined among the ancient sages of the world, the pretended priests of the mysteries of reason. Some said one thing, and some another: some said it had a beginning, some said it had none; and some assigned such a beginning unto it, as it had been better it never had any. Nothing but an assent unto divine revelation can give us a clear understanding hereof. And,—

Obs. II. Then doth faith put forth its power in our minds in a due manner, when it gives us clear and distinct apprehensions of the things we do believe. Faith that gives not understanding, is but fancy.

3. The object of this faith, materially considered, is "the worlds;" and of them three things are affirmed: (1.) That "they were framed." (2.) By what means; "by the word of God." (3.) In what manner; so as "that the things which are seen," etc.

Τοὺς αἰῶνας. The object of this faith is "the worlds:" for the exposition whereof, name and thing, I must refer the reader unto that of chap. 1:2.

Κατηρτίσθαι. (1.) Of these worlds, that which we understand by faith is, that "they were framed." The word here used doth nowhere signify the original production of any thing, but the ordering, disposing, fitting, perfecting, or adorning, of that which is produced. Nor is it anywhere applied to express the creation, or making of the world. Wherefore, although that be included herein (for that which is framed, fashioned, or fitted, must be first made or created), yet something more is intended; namely, the disposal of all created things into that beautiful order which we do behold. For the apostle hath especial respect unto the "things that are seen," as they are orderly, beautiful, and glorious, setting forth the glory of Him by whom they were made; as Ps. 8:1, 3, 19:1, 2; Rom. 1:20. So it is said, that God "by his Spirit garnished the heavens," Job 26:13, —that is, cast them into that curious, glorious frame which we behold; whence they are called "the work of his fingers," Ps. 8, from a curious application of power in their frame and order. Hence he is said to "fashion" this work, Job 10:8, Ps. 119:73; that is, to give it shape and order. And the apostle hath in this word respect unto Gen. 2:1, וַיְכֻלּוּ, "the heavens and the earth, and all the host of them, were finished," perfected, completely framed. Being originally, as unto the matter of them, created out of nothing, in the six days' work they were completely finished and perfected. And,—

Obs. III. As God's first work was, so all his works shall be perfect.—He undertakes nothing but what he will finish and complete in beauty and order. And not only the original production of all things out of nothing, but the framing of them into their present order, is a demonstration of the eternal power of God.

And because the apostle hath respect not merely unto the work of creation, but unto the perfecting and finishing of it in and upon the sixth day's work, he ascribes the understanding of it unto faith alone. For although some few had notions of the original creation of all things by a divine power, yet none ever knew any thing of this framing of the world, or the reducing of the matter of it into perfect order, but by divine revelation only. So we understand it by faith.

Ῥήματι Θεοῦ. (2.) The efficient cause of this framing the worlds is the "word of God;" that exertion of his almighty power which was expressed by his word, 'Let it be so and so,' which was the sign of it, and the indication of its exercise. And the apostle treating of the gradual fashioning of the world into its perfection, hath respect unto the repetition of that word in every day's work, until the whole was accomplished. By this "word of God," or by the divine power of God, whose gradual operation was signified by the repetition of that creating word, "the worlds were made."

And the ineffable facility of almighty power in the production of all things out of nothing, and the framing of them into their perfect state, is intimated in this expression, "He spake, and it was made; he commanded, and it stood fast." It is alike easy to him to dispose of all things that are made. And so faith, as unto the disposal of all things by divine Providence, in times of greatest difficulties and insuperable obstacles, is secured by the consideration of the easy production of all things out of nothing by the same power. And this is that which the apostle intends to fix on the minds of believers in this fundamental instance of the work and effects of faith. But whereas that which he exhorts and encourages his Hebrews unto is a patient continuance in the profession of the gospel, against all difficulties and oppositions, giving them assurance that faith will enable them thereunto; this of its assent unto the creation of the world, a thing so long since past, doth not seem to be of any use or force unto these ends. For although we may believe the creation of the worlds by an act of divine power, yet it doth not seem to follow thence that faith will strengthen us, and make us victorious in our sufferings. But two things the apostle aims to evince herein, which are eminently suited unto this design: [1.] That "faith is the evidence of things not seen;" thereby to call the Hebrews unto the consideration of its proper object, whereon when it is duly fixed it will carry them comfortably through all their difficulties. [2.] That they might know how easy it is with God to help, relieve, and deliver them, by changing the nature of all things at his pleasure, who by his word, through an almighty facility, erected and perfected the worlds. And this consideration doth God himself frequently propose for the confirmation of the faith of the church in all their troubles, Isa. 40:28, 44:24, 45:12, 51:13.

(3.) The way whereby the worlds were thus framed, is declared in the latter part of the verse: "So that things which are seen," etc.

Τὰ βλεπόμενα. [1.] The subject spoken of is τὰ βλεπόμενα, "things that are seen." This is not of the same extent with the τοὺς αἰῶνας, "the worlds," which were framed; for they comprise all things visible and invisible, in heaven and earth, Col. 1:16. But the apostle restrains the subject spoken of unto those things which are the objects of our senses, and our reason working by them;—these aspectable heavens and the earth, with all their host and ornaments; for these are they that in the first place and immediately "declare the glory of God," Ps. 8, 19; Rom. 1:20. All things that are seen, or that may be seen; the heavenly orbs with all their glorious luminaries, the earth with all that is on it and in it, the sea with all its fulness; all these things that are seen by us, by any of mankind, or that may be so, with these things, their greatness, their glory, their order, their use, the minds of men are and ought to be affected.

Εἰς τὸ μὴ γεγονέναι. [2.] Of these things it is affirmed, that they "were not made of things which do appear." "Made" they were, but "not of things which do appear;" which seems to be a negation of any pre-existing material cause. Some, as was observed, by the transposition of the negative particle, read the words, "were made of things that do not appear;" that is, they were made by the invisible power of God. So it answers unto that of the same apostle, Rom. 1:20, "For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead." Ἐκ φαινομένων. These visible things were made by those which are invisible, even the eternal power and wisdom of God. And this sense I would embrace, if the phrase ἐκ φαινομένων would bear it, which seems rather to respect the material than the efficient cause. But we may observe,—

1st. That φαινόμενα are things that "appear clearly, illustriously," in their shape and order.

2dly. That the apostle doth not speak absolutely of the first original production of all things out of nothing, but of the forming, framing, and fashioning of all things into their proper state and order,—called the "finishing of the heavens and the earth, with their host," or order and ornaments.

3dly. There is therefore in the words, (1st.) A negation of any pre-existing material cause unto the creation of these worlds: (2dly.) An assignation of the only efficient cause of it, which is the power of God; which things are rather supposed than asserted in the words: (3dly.) Respect unto the order of the creation of all things, in bringing them unto their perfection. Now this was, that all the things which we now behold, in their order, glory, and beauty, did

arise or were made by the power of God, out of that chaos, or confused mass of substance, which was itself first made and produced out of nothing, having no cause but the efficiency of divine power. For hereof it is said, that it "was without form, and void, and darkness was upon it," Gen. 1:2;—that is, though absolutely, as a material substance, it was visible, yet it did not appear conspicuously in any shape or form,—it was "void, and without form;" no such things at all appeared as the things which we now behold, that were made out of it by the power of God.

Wherefore in these words, which have much of obscurity and difficulty in them, the apostle doth both intimate the original production of all things out of nothing by the efficacy of divine power, and the making or framing of all things as they are in beauty and order to be seen, out of that unaspectable, unappearing matter which was first made out of nothing, and covered with darkness until it was disposed into order.

The understanding hereof we have by faith alone, from divine revelation. Nothing of the order of the creation can be known or understood any other way. And this the apostle intimates in these particles εἰς τό, that is, ὥστε, "so that." 'By faith alone we understand that the worlds were made; namely, "so as that the things which are seen were not made of things which do appear." And,

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Obs. IV. The aids of reason, with the due consideration of the nature, use, and end of all things, ought to be admitted of, to confirm our minds in the persuasion of the original creation of all things; yet are they not to be rested in, but we must betake ourselves unto faith fixed on divine revelation. For, (1.) If they are alone they will be often shaken with a contrary rational maxim, namely, "Ex nihilo nihil fit." (2.) They can give us no light into the way and manner of the creation of all things, which faith alone discovers.

Hebrews 11: 4

From the proposition of the nature of faith in general, and a declaration of its efficacy with respect unto things believed, the apostle proceeds to give instances of its power and efficacy in particular persons, whose example in believing he proposeth unto the Hebrews for their encouragement. And he begins with Abel, suitably on all accounts unto his design. For, 1. He was the first whose faith is expressly recorded and commended in the Scripture, and so meet to be mentioned in the first place. He was the first in the distribution of

the ages of the church that he makes. 2. He was the first that expressed his faith in duties of worship, or made public, solemn profession thereof,—the duty which he calls the Hebrews unto. 3. He was the first that suffered in the cause of Christ, or for a testimony given unto faith in him. 4. He suffered the utmost of what any among them could fear, even death itself, by the shedding of his blood; which they had not yet undergone,—they had "not yet resisted unto blood." Wherefore on all accounts this was the meetest instance to begin withal, wherein his whole cause and argument, in all the parts of it, is confirmed.

Ver. 4.—Πίστει πλείονα θυσίαν Ἄβελ παρὰ Καΐν προσήνεγκε τῷ Θεῷ, δι᾽ ἧς ἐμαρτυρήθη εἶναι δίκαιος, μαρτυροῦντος ἐπὶ τοῖς δώροις αὐτοῦ τοῦ Θεοῦ· καὶ δι᾽ αὐτῆς ἀποθανὼν ἔτι λαλεῖται.

Πλείονα θυσίαν. Vulg. Lat., "plurimam hostiam;" using a word in the superlative degree, because "plurem" in the comparative is not usual. "A greater host," say the Rhemists, attending to the first signification of the word, but forsaking its sense. The Syriac, דְּבָחְתָא דְּמֵיהְוְרָא טָב, "a sacrifice more (far more) excellent," or "precious." "Hostiam majoris pretii," Beza; "a sacrifice of more worth" or "value," referring it to the matter of the sacrifice. "Gratiorem," "more acceptable."

Ἐμαρτυρήθη. Vulg. Lat., "testimonium consecutus est;" "he obtained testimony." Syr., הֲוָת עֲלַוְהִי סָהֲדוּתָא, "there is extant (recorded) concerning him a testimony." "Testimonium obtinuit," "testimonio est ornatus;" he "obtained witness," he was "adorned with this testimony." See of the word, verse 2.

Ἐπὶ τοῖς δώροις αὐτοῦ, "muneribus ejus," "de donis ejus." Syr., עַל קוּרְבָּנֵהּ, "concerning his offering," "the sacrifice that he offered."

Ver. 4.—By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent [acceptable] sacrifice than Cain; by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of [unto or concerning] his gifts; and by it he being dead yet speaketh, [or is spoken of].

1. The person instanced in is Abel, the second son of Adam, and first son of the promise, and that under the considerations mentioned before. 2. It is affirmed of him, that he "offered sacrifice unto God." 3. The manner of it is declared in comparison with that of Cain; he "offered a more excellent sacrifice." 4. Hereon there was with respect unto him a double consequent: (1.) When he was alive, that "he obtained witness that he was righteous;" (2.) When he was dead, that "he yet speaketh."

Ἄβελ. 1. The person instanced in is Abel; he who was without example, without outward encouragement, without any visible theatre, without any witness of his sufferings to transmit them unto others, but God alone; the first in the world who suffered death in the cause of Christ and his worship. And this he did from his own brother, from one that joined with him in the outward acts of divine worship; to give an example of the two churches, the suffering and the persecuting, to the end of the world. This hath made him famous in all generations; which, as Chrysostom thinks, is intended in the last clause of the words, ἔτι λαλεῖται, "he is yet spoken of;" that is, with fame and renown.

Obs. I. Every circumstance in suffering shall add to the glory of the sufferer; and those who suffer here for Christ without witness, as many have done to death in prisons and dungeons, have yet an all-seeing Witness to give them testimony in due season.—"The righteous shall be had in everlasting remembrance;" and nothing that is done or suffered for God shall be lost for ever.

2. That which is affirmed in general of this person is, that "he offered sacrifice to God," and that he did it "by faith." An account hereof is given us, Gen. 4:3–5, which the apostle hath respect unto. And it is there declared,—

(1.) What time he offered this sacrifice; it was מִקֵּץ יָמִים,—that is, "after the expiration of some time" or days, namely, after he and Cain were settled in their distinct callings, verse 3. Until then they had been under the instruction of their parents; but being now fixed in their own peculiar stations and callings, they made their distinct solemn profession of the worship of God; which is the sense of the place, though not observed by any expositors.

(2.) The matter of his offering was "the firstlings of his flock, and of the fat thereof." [1.] It was of living creatures, and therefore was made by mactation, or the shedding of blood; whence the apostle calls it θυσία, "a sacrifice by mactation;" זֶבַח, though in the text it comes under the name of מִנְחָה, which he renders by δώρον, "a gift." [2.] It was of the best. 1st. Whilst they were alive, "the firstlings of the flock;" which God afterwards took as his portion, Exod. 13:12. 2dly. When it was dead, it was of "the fat of them;" which God also claimed as his own, Lev. 3:16, 7:25;—that is, the fat of those firstlings. For his sacrifice was a holocaust, wherein, after the blood was shed at the altar, and offered unto God, the fat was burned on the altar, and the whole body at a distance from it. It appears, therefore, that the sacrifice of Abel was, as unto the matter of it, both in itself and in God's esteem, of the most precious and valuable things in the

whole creation, subject unto man and his use. And even hence it may be called πλείονα θυσίαν παρὰ Καΐν, "a more excellent sacrifice than that of Cain," which was only "of the fruit of the ground," and that, it may be, gathered "raptim,"—without choice or judgment of what was most meet to be offered unto God. And it is for ever dedicated as a rule for the church in all ages, that,—

Obs. II. We are to serve God with the best that we have, the best that is in our power, with the best of our spiritual abilities; which God afterwards fully confirmed.

Τῷ Θεῷ. (3.) And he offered this sacrifice "to God," τῷ Θεῷ, לַיהוָה, Gen. 4:3. This was, from the first institution of it, the highest and most peculiar way of owning and paying homage unto the Divine Being. Unto whomsoever sacrifice is offered, he is owned as God. And therefore when the Gentiles sacrificed to the devil, as they did, 1 Cor. 10:20, they owned him thereby as "the god of this world," 2 Cor. 4:4. And there are many superstitious observances in the Papacy that intrench on this idolatry.

Πίστει. (4.) He offered it "by faith." Now faith herein respects, [1.] The institution of the worship; and, [2.] The heart or mind of the worshippers.

[1.] He did it by faith, because he had respect in what he did unto God's institution, which consists of a command and a promise, which faith hath regard unto. It was not a service that he himself invented; for if it were, he could not have performed it in faith, unto whose formal nature it belongs to respect a divine command and promise.

[2.] He did it in faith, in that he did it in the exercise of saving faith in God therein. He did it not hypocritically, he did it not in a mere attendance unto the outward duty; but it was kindled in his own heart by the Holy Spirit, before it was fired on the altar from heaven. For,—

Obs. III. God gives no consequential approbation of any duties of believers, but where the principle of a living faith goes previously in their performance.

Παρὰ Καΐν. 3. It is observed by the apostle, that he thus offered "a better, a choicer, a more excellent sacrifice than Cain;" for the "plurimam" of the Vulgar Latin is not capable of any good interpretation. And the reason whence it was so must be inquired into. And,—

(1.) We observed before, that as to the matter of it, it was better, more valuable and precious, than that of Cain. But this is not a sufficient cause of ascribing such an excellency and preference unto it, as that on the account thereof Abel should obtain such acceptance with God, and a testimony from

him. "Firstlings of the flock, and their fat," were better than ordinary "fruits of the ground;" but yet not so as to constitute such a difference. Besides, the design of the apostle is to declare the efficacy and prevalency of faith, and not of any especial kind of sacrifices. Wherefore δι᾽ ἧς, "for which," or "whereby," in the next words, is to be referred unto πίστει, "faith," and not unto θυσίαν, or "sacrifice," though that be the next antecedent. Wherefore,—

(2.) This difference was from his faith. And two things did depend thereon: [1.] That his person was justified in the sight of God antecedently unto his sacrifice, as we shall see immediately. [2.] On the account thereof his sacrifice was grateful and acceptable unto God, as is commonly observed from the order of the words, "The LORD had respect unto Abel and to his offering."

But yet it is not evident where the great difference lay. For Cain also no doubt brought his offering in faith: for he believed the being of God, that God is, with his omnipotent power in the creation of the world, as also his government of it with rewards and punishments; for all this he professed in the sacred offering that he brought unto the Lord. And it is a vain fancy of the Targumist, who introduceth Cain and Abel disputing about these things, and Cain denying them all: for he made profession of them all in his offering or sacrifice. Wherefore it is certain that the faith of Abel and Cain differed, as in their especial nature, so in their acts and objects. For,—

(1.) Cain considered God only as a creator and preserver, whereon he offered the fruits of the earth, as an acknowledgment that all these things were made, preserved, and bestowed on man, by him; but he had no respect unto sin, or the way of deliverance from it revealed in the first promise. The faith of Abel was fixed on God, not only as a creator, but as redeemer also; as him who, in infinite wisdom and grace, had appointed the way of redemption by sacrifice and atonement intimated in the first promise. Wherefore his faith was accompanied with a sense of sin and guilt, with his lost condition by the fall, and a trust in the way of redemption and recovery which God had provided. And this he testified in the kind of his sacrifice, which was by death and blood; in the one owning the death which himself by reason of sin was obnoxious unto; in the other the way of atonement, which was to be by blood, the blood of the promised Seed.

(2.) They differed in their especial nature and acts. For the faith of Abel was saving, justifying, a principle of holy obedience, an effect of the Holy Spirit in his mind and heart: that of Cain was a naked, barren assent unto the truths

before mentioned, which is usually described under the name of a common and temporary faith; which is evident from the event, in that God never accepted his person nor his offerings.

And these are the things which still make the hidden difference between the professors of the same faith and worship in general, whereof God alone is the judge, approving some, and rejecting others. So from the foundation of the world there was provision laid in to warn the church in all ages, that the performance of the outward duties of divine worship is not the rule of the acceptance of men's persons with God. A distinction is made from the inward principle whence those duties do proceed. Yet will not the world receive the warning unto this day. Nothing is of a higher provocation, than that the same duty should be accepted in some, and rejected in others, and that because the persons of the one are accepted, and not of the other. Many have no greater quarrel at religion, than that God had respect unto Abel and his offering, and not to Cain and his.

4. As to the consequences of Abel's faith,—

The first consequent of this efficacy of faith in Abel is, that "he obtained witness that he was righteous."

Δι᾽ ἧς. "By which;" that is, by which faith, as we showed before.

Ἐμαρτυρήθη. "He was testified unto;" "he obtained witness;"—that is, from God himself. And this was so famous in the church, that he seems commonly to be called by that name, "the righteous Abel;" as he is by our Saviour, speaking of him, Matt. 23:35. But we do not find any such testimony in express words given unto him in the Scripture. Wherefore the apostle proves his assertion by that wherein such a testimony is virtually contained. "For God," saith he, "testified unto his gifts;" wherein he allegeth those words in Moses, "The LORD had respect unto Abel and to his offering." He testified, in the approbation of his offering, that he had respect unto his person: that is, that he judged, esteemed, and accounted him righteous; for otherwise God is no respecter of persons. Whomsoever God accepts or respects, he testifieth him to be righteous; that is, to be justified, and freely accepted with him. This Abel was by faith antecedently unto his offering. He was not made righteous, he was not justified by his sacrifice; but therein he showed his faith by his works: and God by acceptance of his works of obedience justified him, as Abraham was justified by works; namely, declaratively; he declared him so to be.

Obs. IV. Our persons must be first justified, before our works of obedience can be accepted with God; for by that acceptance he testifies that we are righteous.

Τοῖς δώροις. By what way God gave this testimony unto the gifts or sacrifice of Abel, is not expressed. Most do judge that it was by causing fire to fall from heaven to kindle and consume his sacrifice on the altar. Certain it is that it was by some such assured token and pledge, as whereby his own faith was strengthened, and Cain provoked. For God did that with respect unto him and his offering which he did not towards Cain and his; whereby both of them knew how things stood between God and them. As Esau knew that Jacob had gotten the blessing, which made him resolve to kill him; so Cain knew that Abel and his offering were accepted with God, whereon he slew him.

And here we have the prototype of the believing and malignant churches in all ages;—of them who, under the profession of religion, are "born after the Spirit," or after the promise; and those that are "born after the flesh" only. Then that began which the apostle affirms still to continue: "He that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit; even so it is now," Gal. 4:29. This was the first public, visible acting of the enmity between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent; for "Cain was of the wicked one" (the seed of the serpent), "and slew his brother," 1 John 3:12. And a pledge or representation it was of the death of Christ himself from the same principle. And it being the first instance, and consequently the pattern and example of the two seeds in all ages, we may give a brief account of it.

(1.) The foundation of the difference lay in their inward different principles. The one was a true believer, born of the Spirit, and heir of the promise; the other was of the evil one, under the power of the principles of sin and malice. Yet notwithstanding these different internal principles, they lived together for a season in outward peace, as believers and unbelievers may do, and as yet do.

(2.) The occasion of acting this enmity in Cain, was the visible worship of God. Until that was undertaken and engaged in, he carried things quietly with his brother; as others walking in his way and spirit continue to do. But from hence, on many accounts, they take occasion to act their enmity.

(3.) In this public worship Abel attended diligently unto the mind of God and conduct of faith, as we have showed; Cain trusted unto the formality of the outward work, without much regard to either of them. And there is nothing

wherein true believers do more carefully act faith according to the mind of God than in his solemn worship, according to the example of Abel, others adhering for the most part unto their own inventions.

(4.) Hereon God manifested his approbation of the one and his disapprobation of the other; which provoked Cain to exercise his rage and malice unto the death of his brother. Their worship was different in the matter and manner of it. This provoked not Cain; he liked his own way better than his brother's. But when there was testimony given of God's acceptance of his brother and his worship, with a disapprobation of him and his, this he would revenge with the blood of his brother. God did not afterwards continue to give, nor doth he now give, any outward testimony of the approbation of one, and the disapprobation of another. Howbeit, a secret sense and fear hereof ariseth in the hearts of evil men, whence Satan fills them with envy and malice, and stirs them up unto persecution. For in themselves they find nothing of that spiritual advantage and refreshment which ariseth in the true worship of God unto sincere believers. And they on the other side do openly avow such a satisfaction in an apprehension of God's acceptance of them, as that they can undergo any persecutions on the account thereof. This provokes the world; this was the rise, this is the progress of persecution. And we may learn,—

Obs. V. That those whom God approves must expect that the world will disapprove them, and ruin them if it can.

Obs. VI. Where there is a difference within, in the hearts of men, on the account of faith and the want of it, there will for the most part be unavoidable differences about outward worship. So there hath been always between the true church and false worshippers.

Obs. VII. God's approbation is an abundant recompence for the loss of our lives. All which are plain in this instance of Abel.

Δι᾽ αὐτῆς. The second consequent of the efficacy of the faith of Abel, was after his death: "And by it he being dead yet speaketh." "By it;"—that is, by the same faith; by the means of that faith that was the ground of his acceptance with God, whereon that which is ascribed unto his faith doth depend. Ἀποθανὼν ἔτι λαλεῖ. And this is, that "he, being dead, yet speaketh." Δαλεῖται, being of a middle form, may be rendered either "he speaketh," or "he is spoken of." And accordingly this expression is variously interpreted. Some take it for the good fame and report that Abel had in all generations; he was celebrated, well spoken of, and yet continueth so to be. And this way the word is applied by

most of the ancients. But it is not according to the mind of the apostle. For, (1.) It is evident that he ascribes something peculiar unto Abel, wherein others were not to be joined with him; but this of a good report is not so, but common to him with Noah, Abraham, and all the patriarchs,—they were spoken of, and their praise celebrated in the church no less than Abel's. (2.) The apostle plainly proceeds in representing the story concerning him, and what fell out after his death, as expressed in the words of God himself, Gen. 4:10, "The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground." This is the speaking of Abel after his death which is here intended; and this was peculiar unto him, it is not affirmed of any one besides in the Scripture. (3.) The apostle interprets himself, Heb. 12:24, where he directly ascribes this speaking unto the blood of Abel, as we shall see on that place, if God permit.

Obs. VIII. There is a voice in all innocent blood shed by violence.—There is an appeal in it from the injustice and cruelty of men unto God as the righteous judge of all. And of all cries, God gives the most open evidence that he hears it, and admits of the appeal. Hence most murders committed secretly are discovered; and most of those that are openly perpetrated, are openly avenged sooner or later by God himself. For his honour and glory are concerned to appear, upon the appeal to his justice which is made by innocent blood. Especially he is so, when men, in taking away the lives of others, would entitle him unto it, by doing it under a pretence of judgment (which is his),—by wicked judges and false witnesses, as it was in the case of Naboth; which he will not bear withal. Wherefore this voice, this speaking of blood, ariseth from the eternal law which God hath given unto mankind for the preservation of life from violence, whereof he hath taken on himself the supreme conservation and guarantee, Gen. 9:5, 6.

But there is somewhat more in this speaking of the blood of Abel. For by the record of the Scripture God hath designed it unto other ends, in the way of an ordinance; as, (1.) That it should be a type of the future persecutions and sufferings of the church. (2.) That it might be a pledge of the certain vengeance that God will take in due time on all murderous persecutors. Abel, being dead, speaketh these words of our Saviour, "Shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him? I tell you that he will avenge them speedily," Luke 18:7, 8. (3.) That it might be instructive unto faith and patience in suffering, as an example approved of God, and giving evidence unto future rewards and punishments.

And from this first instance the apostle hath given a mighty confirmation of his intention concerning the power and efficacy of faith, enabling men with blessed success to do and suffer according to the mind of God. For Abel did, by faith alone, 1. Obtain the blessing of the promise from his elder brother, as did Jacob afterwards. 2. By it, as apprehending the promise, his person was justified and accepted with God. 3. He was directed thereby to worship God, both as to matter and manner, according unto his own will. 4. He had a divine testimony given both as unto his person as righteous, and his duties as accepted, to his unspeakable consolation. 5. He had this honour, that God testified his respect unto him when he was dead, and made his blood as shed an ordinance unto the instruction of the church in all ages.

From these considerations this example was of great force to convince the Hebrews, that if indeed they were true believers, as he supposed of them, chap. 10:39, that faith would safely carry them through all the difficulties they had to conflict withal in their profession, unto the glory of God and their own eternal salvation. And we may learn, that,—

Obs. IX. Whatever troubles faith may engage us into in the profession of it, with obedience according to the mind of God, it will bring us safely off from them all at last (yea, though we should die in the cause), unto our eternal salvation and honour.

Hebrews 11: 5

His second instance is in Enoch; for he is the second man unto whom testimony is personally given that he "pleased God," and was accepted with him. Others no doubt before him did so, and were so accepted; for he was "the seventh from Adam:" but as Abel was the first, so he is the second who was so peculiarly testified unto; and therefore the apostle instanceth in him in the second place, after Abel.

Ver. 5.—Πίστει Ἐνὼχ μετετέθη τοῦ μὴ ἰδεῖν θάνατον, καὶ οὐχ εὑρίσκετο, διότι μετέθηκεν αὐτὸν ὁ Θεός· πρὸ γὰρ τῆς μεταθέσεως αὐτοῦ μεμαρτύρηται εὐηρεστηκέναι τῷ Θεῷ.

Ver. 5.—By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God.

Ἐνώχ. This Enoch hath a double testimony given unto him in the Scripture; one in the Old Testament, the other in the New. That in the Old Testament is unto his faith and holiness, Gen. 5. That in the New, is unto his being a prophet, and what he prophesied, Jude 14, 15. But it is probable that all the holy fathers before the flood were prophets and preachers; as Enoch was a prophet, and Noah was a preacher of righteousness, 2 Pet. 2:5. In their ministry did the Spirit of God strive with men; which at the flood he put an end unto, Gen. 6:3. Yea, by the Spirit of Christ, which was in them, 1 Pet. 1:11, he preached repentance unto them, before they were cast into their eternal prison, 1 Pet. 3:19. And these seem to have had a different ministry, for the declaration of the whole counsel of God. Noah was "a preacher of righteousness," one that proposed the righteousness of God through the promise, to encourage men unto faith and repentance; as we say, a gospel-preacher. And Enoch preached the threatenings of the law, the future judgment, with the vengeance that would be taken on ungodly sinners, especially scoffers and persecutors; which is the substance of his prophecy or sermon recorded in the Epistle of Jude.

And he seems to have given his name unto his son in a spirit of prophecy; for he called him מְתוּשֶׁלַח, Gen. 5:21;—that is, "when he dieth," there shall be a "dismission," namely, of mankind from the earth; for he died just before the flood.

The first of these testimonies the apostle here makes use of, and so expounds it as to take away sundry difficulties that in itself it is liable to. לָקַח אֹתוֹ אֱלֹהִים, "God took him;" which the author of the Book of Wisdom expounds in a severe sense, "God took him away, lest wickedness should alter his understanding," chap. 4:11, groundlessly. The apostle renders it by "translated him;" that is, into a more blessed state. And וְאֵינֶנּוּ, "and he was not," which some of the Jews would have to intimate his death, the apostle renders by, "he was not found,"—that is, any more amongst men; and gives the reason of it, namely, "because God had translated him" into another world. And as unto what is affirmed in the story, that he "walked with God," the apostle interprets it as a testimony that "he pleased God;" which makes plain the mind of the Holy Ghost in the words of Moses.

Of this Enoch it is affirmed, 1. That he was "translated;" 2. The end of that translation is declared, "that he should not see death;" 3. The consequent of it, "he was not found;" 4. The efficient cause of that translation, and the reason of that consequent, he was not found, "because God had translated him;" 5. The

means of this translation on his own part, it was "by faith;" 6. The proof hereof "for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God:" which must be opened briefly.

Μετετέθη. 1. It is affirmed of him that he was "translated;" translated out of one state and condition into another. There are but two states of good men, such as Enoch was, from first to last: (1.) The state of faith and obedience here in this world. This Enoch lived in three hundred years; so long he lived and "walked with God." To "walk with God," is to lead a life of faith in covenant obedience unto God. וַיִּתְהַלֵּךְ, "he walked;" the same word whereby God prescribeth covenant obedience unto Abraham, הִתְהַלֵּךְ לְפָנַי, Gen. 17:1. The word in both places, in the same conjugation of Hithpael, signifies a "continued walk up and down," every way. So to walk with God, is in all our ways, actions, and duties, to have a continual regard unto God, by faith in him, dependence on him, and submission to him. This state Enoch had lived in and passed through. (2.) The other state is a blessedness in the enjoyment of God. No other state of good men is once intimated in the Scripture, or consistent with God's covenant. Wherefore Enoch being translated from the one, was immediately instated in the other, as was Elijah afterwards. As unto any further conjectures of the particular place where, or condition wherein he is, the Scripture leaves no room for them; and those that have been made have been rash and foolish. Some things we may observe, to explain this translation.

(1.) It was of the whole person, as unto state and condition. "Enoch was translated;" his whole person, soul and body, was taken out of one condition, and placed in another.

(2.) Such a translation, without a dissolution of the person, is possible; for as it was afterwards actually made in Elijah, so the apostle intimates the desirable glory of it, 2 Cor. 5:4, "We groan, ... that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life."

(3.) Unto this translation there is a change required, such as they shall have who will be found alive at the coming of Christ: "We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed," 1 Cor. 15:51. The same change in the bodies of them that are translated as there is in those that are raised from the grave is necessary unto this translation. They must be made incorrupt, powerful, glorious, spiritual, 1 Cor. 15:42–44. So was it with the body of Enoch, by the power of God who

translated him; his body was made in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, incorrupt, spiritual, immortal, meet for the blessed habitation above. So was Enoch translated.

(4.) If any one shall ask why Enoch was not joined with Elijah, who was afterwards in like manner translated, at his appearance with the Lord Christ in his transfiguration, but Moses rather, who died, Matt. 17:3; I say, although I abhor all curiosities in sacred things, yet it seems to be agreeable unto the mind of God, that,—the discourse which they had then with the Lord Jesus Christ being about the accomplishment of the law in his death, as it was,—Moses who was the lawgiver, and Elijah the most zealous defender of it, should be employed in that service, and not Enoch, who was not concerned therein.

Τοῦ μὴ ἰδεῖν θάνατον. 2. The next end of this translation was, "that he should not see death;" or this was the effect of it, that he should not die. Death being the great object of sensible consideration, it is expressed by words of sense, seeing it tasting it, and the like. And two things are intended herein: (1.) That this translation was without death, it was not by death. The Hebrew word לָקַח, "took," "God took him," Gen. 5:24, being applied unto his taking away a person by death, Ezek. 24:16, 18, doth not necessarily prove that he died not. But it is here interpreted by the apostle that this taking away was by a translation from one state unto another, without the intervention of death. (2.) That, in a way of eminent grace and favour, he was freed from death. The great Lawgiver put in an exception unto the general sanction of the law, that all sinners should die: and this being in itself and its own nature penal, as also destructive of our present constitution, in the dissolution of soul and body, an exemption from it was a signal grace and favour.

And this was a divine testimony that the body itself is also capable of eternal life. When all mankind saw that their bodies went into the dust and corruption universally, it was not easy for them to believe that they were capable of any other condition, but that the grave was to be their eternal habitation, according to the divine sentence on the entrance of sin, "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." But herein God gave us a pledge and assurance that the body itself hath a capacity of eternal blessedness in heaven. But whereas this evidence of a capacity in the body to enjoy eternal life and blessedness was confined unto such as never died, it could not be a convincing pledge of the resurrection of bodies over which death once had a dominion. This, therefore, was reserved for the resurrection of Christ.

Καὶ οὐχ εὑρίσκετο. 3. Another consequent of this translation is, that "he was not found." In the text of Moses it is only וְאֵינֶנּוּ, "and he was not." He went away, and was no more among men; as David expresseth his departure from among men, Ps. 39:14, בְּטֶרֶם אֵלֵךְ וְאֵינֶנִּי,—"before I go away, and I be not;" that is, in this world any more. But in the exposition of the apostle something further is intimated. Enoch was the principal patriarch in the world, and besides, a great prophet and preacher. The eyes of all men about were upon him. How God "took him" is not declared. Whether there was any visible sign of it, as there was unto Elisha in the taking up of Elijah, 2 Kings 2:11, is uncertain. But doubtless, upon the disappearing of so great a person from the world, there was great inquiry after him. So when Elijah was taken up into heaven, though there was a visible sign of it, and his divine rapture was evident, yet the sons of the prophets, because of the rarity of the thing, would search whether he were not let down again on some mountain, or in some valley; "and they sought three days, and found him not," verses 16, 17. The apostle seems to intimate some such thing in the old world upon the disappearance of Enoch: they made great search after him, but "he was not found." And therefore,—

Διότι μετέθηκεν αὐτὸν ὁ Θεός. 4. He adds the reason why he could not be found on the earth, namely, "because God had translated him" into another state and condition. And herein he gives us the principal efficient cause of his translation; it was an act of God himself, namely, of his power, grace, and favour. And when he did no more appear (וְאֵינֶנּוּ), when he was not found (οὐχ εὑρίσκετο), this was that which all the godly were satisfied in,—it was because God had translated him; whereof there was such evidence as was sufficient security for their faith, although at present we know not what it was in particular. But the apostle doth not only declare the truth of the thing, but also that it was a matter known unto the church in those days; whereon its use did depend.

Πίστει. 5. This the apostle (which was alone unto his present purpose), ascribes unto his faith: "By faith he was translated." He was so, (1.) Not efficiently; faith was not the efficient cause of this translation; it was an immediate act of divine power. (2.) Not meritoriously; for it is recorded as an act of sovereign grace and favour. But, (3.) Instrumentally only, in that thereby he was brought into that state and condition, so accepted with God, as that he was capable of so great grace and favour. But his being made an instance of this divine grace, for the edification of the church in all ages, was an act of sovereignty alone.

And this is peculiar unto these first two instances of the power of faith; that in the one it led him unto death, a bloody death; in the other it delivered him from death, that he did not die at all.

In the field of conjectures used on this occasion, I judge it probable, (1.) That his rapture was visible, in the sight of many that feared God, who were to be witnesses of it unto the world, that it might be his ordinance for the conviction of sinners, and the strengthening of the faith of the church, as also an exposition of the first promise. (2.) That it was by the ministry of angels, as was that of Elijah. (3.) That he was carried immediately into heaven itself, and the presence of God therein. (4.) That he was made partaker of all the glory which was allotted unto the heavenly state before the ascension of Christ; concerning which see our discourse of the Person of Christ. But,—

Obs. I. Whatever be the outward different events of faith in believers in this world, they are all alike accepted with God, approved by him, and shall all equally enjoy the eternal inheritance.

Obs. II. God can and doth put a great difference, as unto outward things, between such as are equally accepted before him.—Abel shall die, and Enoch shall be taken alive into heaven.

I am fully satisfied, from the prophecy of Enoch, recorded by Jude, that he had a great contest with the world about faith, obedience, the worship of God, with the certainty of divine vengeance on ungodly sinners, with the eternal reward of the righteous. And as this contest for God against the world is exceeding acceptable unto him, as he manifested afterwards in his taking of Elijah to himself, who had managed it with a fiery zeal; so in this translation of Enoch upon the like contest, he visibly judged the cause on his side, confirming his ministry, to the strengthening of the faith of the church, and condemnation of the world.

Wherefore, although it be a dream, that the two witnesses mentioned Rev. 11:3–5 are Enoch and Elias personally, yet because their ministry is to bear testimony for God and Christ against the world, thereby plaguing and tormenting the men that dwell on the earth, verse 10, as they also did, there may be an allusion unto them and their ministry. And whereas there are two ways of the confirmation of a ministry; first, By suffering, and that sometimes to death, as did Abel; and, secondly, By God's visible owning of them, as he did Enoch: both these are to befall these two witnesses, who are first to be slain, and then taken up into heaven; first to suffer, and then to be exalted.

Obs. III. There is no such acceptable service unto God, none that he hath set such signal pledges of his favour upon, as zealously to contend against the world in giving witness to his ways, his worship, and his kingdom, or the rule of Christ over all. And,—

Obs. IV. It is a part of our testimony, to declare and witness that vengeance is prepared for ungodly persecutors, and all sorts of impenitent sinners, however they are and may be provoked thereby.

Obs. V. The principal part of this testimony consists in our own personal obedience, or visible walking with God in holy obedience, according to the tenor of the covenant, 2 Pet. 3:11, 14. And,—

6. This the apostle affirms of Enoch in the last place: "For before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God."

Πρὸ γὰρ τῆς μεταθέσεως αὐτοῦ. These words are an entrance into the proof of the apostle's assertion, namely, that it was "by faith Enoch was translated;" which he pursues and confirms in the next verse. He was translated by faith; for before that translation he had that testimony. For it is said of him, that "he walked with God three hundred years;" after which he was translated. The apostle doth not say that this was testified of him before his translation, as signifying the time of the giving that testimony unto him; for it was not until many generations afterward: but this testimony, when given him, did concern the time before his translation, as it doth evidently, Gen. 5:22, 24.

Εὐηριστηκέναι τ�ῶ Θεῶ. That of "walking with God," in Moses, the apostle renders by "pleasing of God;" for this alone is well-pleasing to him. His pleasure, his delight is in them that fear him, that walk before him. And the apostle gives us the whole sense of the divine testimony, that he walked with God, namely, so as that his walk with God was well-pleasing unto him,—that it was accepted with him, and his person therein.

And this also is peculiar unto these first two instances, that they had an especial testimony from God, as unto the acceptance of them and their services. So it is testified of Abel, that "the LORD had respect unto him and to his offering;" and of Enoch, that "he pleased God;" both of them being declared to be righteous by faith.

And we may observe from the whole, that,—

Obs. VI. It is an effect of divine wisdom, as to dispose the works of his providence and the accomplishment of his promises unto an ordinary established rule, declared in his word, which is the only guidance of faith; so

sometimes to give extraordinary instances in each kind, both in a way of judgment and in a way of grace and favour.—Of the latter sort was the taking of Enoch into heaven; and of the former was the firing of Sodom and Gomorrah from heaven. Such extraordinary acts, either the wicked security of the world or the edification of the church doth sometimes make necessary.

Obs. VII. Faith in God through Christ hath an efficacy in the procuring of such grace, mercy, and favour in particular, as it hath no ground in particular to believe.—Enoch was translated by faith; yet did not Enoch believe he should be translated, until he had a particular revelation of it. So there are many particular mercies which faith hath no word of promise to mix itself withal, as unto their actual communication unto us; but yet, keeping itself within its bounds of trust and reliance on God, and acting by patience and prayer, it may be, and is, instrumental in the procurement of them.

Obs. VIII. They must walk with God here who design to live with him hereafter, or they must please God in this world who would be blessed with him in another.

Obs. IX. That faith which can translate a man out of this world, can carry him through the difficulties which he may meet withal in the profession of faith and obedience in this world—Herein lies the apostle's argument. And this latter, the Lord Jesus Christ hath determined to be the lot and portion of his disciples. So he testifies, John 17:15, "I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world; but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil."

In these two instances of Abel and Enoch we have a representation of the state of the old world before the flood. There were two sorts of persons in it;—believers, and such as believed not. Among these there were differences about religion and the worship of God, as between Abel and Cain. Some of them were approved of God, and some were not. Hence arose persecution on the part of the world; and in the church, the wicked, scoffing, persecuting world, was threatened by predictions of judgments and divine vengeance to come, as they were in the preaching and prophecy of Enoch. God in the meantime exercised patience and long-suffering towards them that were disobedient, 1 Pet. 3:20; yet not without some instances of his especial favour towards believers. And thus it is at this day.

Hebrews 11: 6

There being no direct mention made of faith in the testimony given unto Enoch, but only that by walking with God he pleased him, the apostle in this verse proves from thence that it was by faith that he so pleased God, and consequently that thereby he obtained his translation.

Ver. 6.—Χωρὶς δὲ πίστεως ἀδύνατον εὐαρεστῆσαι· πιστεῦσαι γὰρ δεὶ τὸν προσερχόμενον τῷ Θεῷ ὅτι ἐστὶ, καὶ τοῖς ἐκζητοῦσιν αὐτόν μισθαποδότης γίνεται.

Εὐαρεστῆσαι. Τῷ Θεῷ is not in the original, but is in all the old translations, and is to be supplied. We add "him," as contained in the word, and not as a supplement.

Ver. 6.—But without faith [it is] impossible to please him. For it behoveth him that cometh to God, to believe that he is [a God to him, or his God], and [that] he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

The assertion of the apostle whereon he builds his exhortation is, that Enoch was translated by faith. The proof of this assertion he expresseth in the way of a syllogistical argument. The proposition he lays down in the verse foregoing, Enoch had a divine testimony that he pleased God. The assumption consists in this sacred maxim, "Without faith it is impossible to please God:" whence the conclusion follows, by the interposition of another argument of the same kind, namely, that whereby Enoch pleased God, by that he was translated; for his translation was the consequent and effect of his pleasing God. And, thirdly, he gives an illustration and confirmation of his assumption, "For he that cometh to God," etc.

Δέ. The adversative particle δέ, "but," constitutes this form of argument, "He pleased God; but without faith it is impossible," etc.

1. In the proposition itself, the form and matter of it may be considered.

(1.) As unto the form, there is a positive affirmation included in the negative: "Without faith it is impossible to please God;" that is, faith is the only way and means whereby any one may please God. So χωρίς is frequently used to intimate the affirmation of the contrary unto what is denied. John 1:3, Χωρὶς αὐτοῦ, —"Without him nothing was made;" that is, 'Every thing was made by him.' John 15:5, Χωρὶς ἐμοῦ,—"Without me ye can do nothing;" that is, 'By me, or my strength, ye must do all things.' Rom. 10:14, "How shall they hear χωρὶς κηρύσσοντος;"—"without a preacher?" that is, 'All hearing is by a preacher.' See Heb. 7:20, 9:7, 18. Wherefore, "Without faith it is impossible to please God," is the same with, 'All pleasing of God is, and must be, by faith, it being impossible

it should be otherwise.' And this sense of the words is necessary unto the argument of the apostle, which is to prove the power and efficacy of faith with respect unto our acceptation with God.

Εὐαρεστῆσαι. (2.) As unto the matter of the proposition, that which is denied without faith, or that which is enclosed unto the sole agency of faith, is εὐαρεστῆσαι, "to please," "placere," "beneplacere." The verb is used only in this epistle, in these two verses, and chap. 13:16, in the passive voice, "God is well-pleased;" "promeretur Deus," Vulg. Lat., without any signification. The adjective, εὐάρεστος, is used frequently, and constantly applied unto persons or things that are accepted with God, Rom. 12:1, 2, 14:18; 2 Cor. 5:9; Eph. 5:10; Phil. 4:18; Col. 3:20. Three things are here included in it: [1.] That the person be accepted with God, that God be well-pleased with him. [2.] That his duties do please God, that he is well-pleased with them, as he was with the gifts of Abel and the obedience of Enoch. So Heb. 13:16. [3.] That such a person have testimony that he is righteous, just or justified, as Abel and Enoch had, and as all true believers have in the Scripture.

This is that pleasing of God which is enclosed unto faith alone. Otherwise there may be many acts and duties which may be materially such as God is pleased with, and which he will reward in this world, without faith: such was the destruction of the house of Ahab by Jehu. But the pleasing of God under consideration includes the acceptance with God of the person and his duties, or his justification before him. And this regulates the sense of the last clause of the verse. Our coming unto God, and believing in him, must be interpreted with respect unto this well-pleasing of him.

Ἀδύνατον. This is so by faith, as that without it it is "impossible." Many in all ages have attempted thus to please God without faith, and yet continue so to do. Cain began it. His design in his offering was to please God; but he did it not in faith, and failed in his design. And this is the great difference always in the visible church. All in their divine worship profess a desire to please God, and hope that so they shall do,—to what purpose else was it to serve him?—but, as our apostle speaks, many of them seek it not by faith, but by their own works and duties which they do and perform, Rom. 9:32. Those alone attain their end who seek it by faith. And therefore God frequently rejects the greatest multiplication of duties, where faith is wanting, Isa. 1:11–15, Ps. 40.

2. Wherefore, saith the apostle, this is a fundamental maxim of religion, namely, 'It is impossible to please God any other way but by faith.' Let men desire, design, and aim at it whilst they please, they shall never attain unto it. And it is so impossible, (1.) From divine constitution. Hereunto the Scripture bears testimony from first to last, namely, that none can, that none shall, ever please God but by faith, as our apostle pleads at large, Rom. 3–5. (2.) From the nature of the thing itself, faith being the first regular motion of the soul towards God, as we shall see immediately.

Howbeit the contrary apprehension, namely, that men by their works and duties may please God without faith, as well as by faith, or in the same manner as with faith, is so deeply fixed in the minds of men, as that it hath produced various evil consequences. For,—

(1.) Some have disputed with God himself, as if he dealt not equally and justly with them, when he was not well pleased with their duties, nor accepted themselves. Cain was so, being thereon not more wrathful with his brother than with God himself, as is plain in the rebuke given unto him, Gen. 4:5–7. So did the Jews frequently: "Wherefore have we fasted, and thou seest not?" Isa. 58:3. And so it is with all hypocrites unto this day: should they at any time be convinced that God is not pleased either with their persons or their duties, especially the duties of religious worship which they perform unto him,—which they judge to be every whit as good as theirs who are accepted,—they are angry in their hearts with God himself, and judge that he deals not well with them at all.

(2.) This is that which keeps up hatred, feuds, and persecutions, in the visible church. The greatest part generally are contented with the outward performance of duties, not doubting but that by them they shall please God. But when they find others professing that the sincerity of saving faith, and that working in serious repentance, and universal obedience unto God, are necessary unto this pleasing of God, whereby their duties are condemned, their countenances fall, and they are full of wrath, and are ready even to slay their brethren. There is the same difference, the same grounds and reasons of it, between true believers and persecuting hypocrites still, as was between Abel and Cain. All profess a design to please God, as they both did; all perform the same outward duties, the one commonly more attending unto the rule of them than the other, as they did: but the one sort plead a secret interest in divine favour and acceptation by faith, that is invisible; the other trust unto their outward works; whence an endless difference doth arise between them.

(3.) This hath been the foundation of all superstition in divine worship. For a secret apprehension that God was to be pleased with outward works and duties, as Cain thought, was the reason of the multiplication of innumerable rites and ceremonies in divine service; of all the masses, purgatories, pilgrimages, vows, disciplines, idolatries, that constitute the Roman church. They were all found out in answer unto the inquiry made, Mic. 6:6, 7, "Wherewith shall I come before the LORD, and bow myself before the high God? Shall I come before him with burnt-offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?" Hence one pretended duty, that shall have something to commend it, as its charge, its difficulty, or its beauty as it is adorned, must be added unto another; —all to please God without faith.

(4.) This hath stirred up and maintained innumerable controversies in the church in all ages. Some openly contend that this pleasing of God is the fruit of the merit of our own works, and is not attained by faith. And others endlessly contend to bring our works and duties into the same order and causality, as unto our acceptance before God, with faith itself; and think it as true, as unto the end of the apostle's discourse,—namely, our pleasing of God and being accepted with him,—that without our works it is impossible to please God, as it is that without faith it is impossible to please him: which is to overthrow both his argument and design.

Wherefore, unless we hold fast this truth, namely, that whatever be the necessity of other graces and duties, yet it is faith alone whereby we please God, and obtain acceptance with him, we condemn the generation of the righteous in their cause from the foundation of the world, take part with Cain against Abel, and forego our testimony unto the righteousness of God in Christ. And,

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Obs. I. Where God hath put an impossibility upon any thing, it is in vain for men to attempt it. From the days of Cain multitudes have been designing to please God without faith,—all in vain; like them that would have built a tower whose top should reach to heaven. And,—

Obs. II. It is of the highest importance to examine well into the sincerity of our faith, whether it be of the true kind or no, seeing thereon depends the acceptance of our persons and all our duties. None ever thought that God was to

be pleased without any faith at all; the very design of pleasing him avows some kind of faith: but that especial kind of faith whereby we may be justified, they regard not. Of these things I have treated fully in my book of Justification.

3. Of this assertion the apostle gives a further confirmation or illustration, by showing the necessity of faith unto acceptance with God. And this he doth by declaring the duty of every one that would be so accepted: "For it behoveth him that cometh unto God to believe," etc. Wherein we have, (1.) The assertion of the duty prescribed; "It behoveth him," or he must. (2.) The subject spoken of; which is, "he that cometh unto God." (3.) the duty prescribed; which is, to "believe." (4.) The object of this faith prescribed as a duty, which is twofold; [1.] That "God is;" [2.] That "he is the rewarder of them that diligently seek him."

Γάρ. That he gives a reason and proof of what he had before asserted is declared in the illative conjunction, "for:" This makes the truth herein manifest.

Δεῖ. (1.) He makes application of his assertion to every one concerned in particular in a way of duty. 'Whoever he be that hath this design to come to God, and to be accepted with him, he ought, he must do so. This is his duty, from which no one living shall have an exemption.'

Προσερχόμενον τῷ Θεῷ. (2.) The subject spoken of is, "He that cometh unto God." Προσέρχομαι in general signifies any access, or coming to any person or thing; nor is it used in a sacred sense anywhere in the New Testament but only in this epistle, and 1 Pet. 2:4. But the simple verb, ἔρχομαι, is frequently so used. And this coming unto God signifies in particular an access or approach unto him in sacred worship. See Heb. 10:1, with the exposition. But in general, as in this place, and chap. 7:25, 1 Pet. 2:4, it denotes an access of the person into the favour of God, including the particular addresses unto him with his duties. We must therefore inquire what it is thus to come to God, and what is required thereunto; that we may understand what it is that the apostle makes believing so necessary unto, and whereby he proves that "without faith it is impossible to please God." And,—

[1.] There is required thereunto a previous sense of a wanting, lost condition in ourselves, by a distance from God. No man designs to come to God but it is for relief, satisfaction, and rest. It must be out of an apprehension that he is yet at such a distance from God as not to be capable of relief or rest from him; and that in this distance he is in a condition indigent and miserable; as also that there is relief and rest for him in God. Without these apprehensions no man will ever engage in a design to come unto God, as having no reason for it nor

end in it. And this can be wrought in none sincerely but by faith. All other powers and faculties in the souls of men, without faith, do incline and direct them to look for rest and satisfaction in themselves. This was the highest notion of those philosophers who raised human wisdom into an admiration, namely, the Stoics, "That every one was to seek for all rest and satisfaction in himself, and in nothing else;" and so they came at length expressly to make every man a god to himself. Faith alone is the gracious power which takes us off from all confidence in ourselves, and directs us to look for all in another; that is, in God himself. And therefore it must see that in God which is suited to give relief in this condition. And this is contained in the object of it as here proposed, as we shall see.

[2.] There must antecedently hereunto be some encouragement given unto him that will come to God, and that from God himself. A discovery of our wants, indigence, and misery, makes it necessary that we should do so; but it gives no encouragement so to do, for it is accompanied with a discovery of our unworthiness so to do, and be accepted in doing it. Nor can any encouragement be taken from the consideration of the being of God, and his glorious excellencies absolutely; nor is that anywhere in the Scripture absolutely and in the first place proposed for our encouragement. This, therefore, can be nothing but his free, gracious promise to receive them that come unto him in a due manner; that is, by Christ, as the whole Scripture testifieth. For what some pretend concerning coming unto God by encouragements taken from general notions of his nature, and his works of creation and providence, without any promise, is an empty speculation; nor can they give any single instance of any one person that ever came to God, and found acceptance with him, without the encouragement of divine revelation, which hath in it the nature of a promise. Faith, therefore, is necessary unto this coming to God, because thereby alone we receive, lay hold of, embrace the promises, and are made partakers of them; which the apostle not only expressly affirmeth, but makes it his design to prove in a great part of the chapter, as we shall see. There is nothing, therefore, more fond, more foreign to the apostle's intention, than what is here ignorantly and weakly by some pretended; namely, that faith here is nothing but an "assent unto the truth of the being of God, and his distribution of rewards and punishments," without any respect unto the promise, that is, unto Christ and his mediation, as will yet further appear. Wherefore,—

[3.] To come to God, is to have an access into his favour,—to "please God," as did Enoch; so to come as to be accepted with him. There may be a coming to God with our duties and services, as did Cain, when we are not accepted; but the apostle treats in this place only of an access with acceptance into his grace and favour, as is manifest from his instance, his design, and argument.

Πιστεῦσαι. (3.) For those that have this design, it is their duty to "believe." This is the only way and means of attaining that end. Whence believing itself is often called coming to God, or coming to Christ, Isa. 55:1, 3; John 6:37, 44, 7:37. And it is by faith alone that we have an access into this grace, Rom. 5:2; that is, whereby we thus come to God.

(4.) The object of this faith, or what in this case we ought to believe, is twofold: [1.] The being of God; "Believe that he is." [2.] His office; in that "he is the rewarder of them that diligently seek him."

The Syriac translation seems to make but one entire object of faith in the words, namely, that God is a rewarder, referring both the verb ἐστι and γίνεται unto μισθαποδότης: as if it were said, "must believe that God is, and will be, the rewarder of them that diligently seek him,"—namely, in this world and hereafter also. But I shall follow the usual distinction of the words.

Ὅτι ἐστί. [1.] The first thing to be believed is, that "God is." The expression seems to be imperfect, and something more is intended than the divine being absolutely, as, his God. The schoolmen, and sundry expositors on the place, as Catharinus, Salmeron, Tena, etc., dispute earnestly how the being of God, which is the object of natural science, seeing it may be known by the light of reason, can be proposed as the object of faith, which respects only things unseen, inevident, supernatural, made known by revelation only. And many distinctions they apply unto the solution of this difficulty. For my part, I no way doubt but the same thing or verity may on diverse respects be the object of reason and faith also. So is it when that which is consistent with reason, and in general discoverable by it, as the creation of the world, is more distinctly and clearly proposed unto faith by divine revelation; which doth not destroy the former assent on principles of reason, but confirms the mind in the persuasion of the same truth by a new evidence given unto it. But the apostle speaks not here of any such assent unto the truth of the being and existence of God as may be attained by reason or the light of nature; but that which is the pure object of faith, which the light of reason can no way reach unto. For that he treats of such things only, is evident from the description which he premiseth of the

nature of faith, namely, that it is "the evidence of things not seen." And it is such a believing of the being of God as gives encouragement to come unto him, that we who are sinners may find favour and acceptance with him. And that apprehension which men may have of the being of God by the light of nature, yea, and of his being a rewarder, Cain had, as we have showed; and yet he had no share in that faith which the apostle here requires. Wherefore it is evident, from the context, the circumstances of the subject-matter treated on, and the design of the apostle, that the being or existence of God proposed as the object of our faith, to be believed in a way of duty, is the divine nature with its glorious properties or perfections, as engaged and acting themselves in a way of giving rest, satisfaction, and blessedness, unto them that come unto him.

When we are obliged to believe that he is, it is what he proposeth when he declareth himself by that name, I AM, Exod. 3:14; whereby he did not only signify his existence absolutely, but that he so was, as that he would actually give existence and accomplishment unto all his promises unto the church. So when he revealed himself unto Abraham by the name of "Almighty God," Gen. 17:1, he was not obliged to believe only his "eternal power and Godhead," which are intelligible by the light of nature, Rom. 1:20, but also that he would be so unto him, in exerting his almighty power on his behalf; whereon he requires of him that he should "walk before him and be perfect." Wherefore the believing that God is, "I AM," the "Almighty God," is to believe him as our God in covenant, exercising the holy properties of his nature, his power, wisdom, goodness, grace, and the like, in a way of giving rest and blessedness unto our souls. For all this he required Abraham to believe, as the ground of the covenant on his part; whereon he requires universal obedience from him.

To suppose that the apostle intends by that faith whereby we may come to God, and find acceptance with him, nothing but an assent unto the being of God absolutely considered, which is altogether fruitless in the generality of mankind, is a vain notion, unsuited unto his design. Wherefore,—

Obs. III. God himself, in his self-sufficiency and his all-sufficiency, meet to act towards poor sinners in a way of bounty, is the first motive or encouragement unto, and the last object of faith. See Isa. 50:10; 1 Pet. 1:21.

Μισθαποδότης γίνεται. [2.] The second thing which, in order unto the same end of acceptance with God, we are required to believe, is, "that he is," or will be, "a rewarder of them that diligently seek him;" that is, he will act in all things towards them suitably unto the proposal which he makes of himself unto faith when he says, "I AM," and "I am God Almighty," or the like.

Two things may be considered in this object of faith: 1st. The assertion of the truth itself; "God is a rewarder." 2dly. The limitation of the exercise of that property as unto its object; unto "them that diligently seek him." And this limitation wholly excludes the general notion, of believing in rewards and punishments from God, present and future, from being here intended; for it is confined only unto the goodness and bounty of God towards believers,—"those that seek him." His dealing with them is not exactly according unto distributive justice with respect unto themselves, but in a way of mercy, grace, and bounty. For "the reward is of grace, and not of works."

1st. That which these words of the apostle have respect unto, and which is the ground of the faith here required, is contained in the revelation that God made of himself unto Abraham, Gen. 15:1, "Fear not, Abram; I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward." God is so a rewarder unto them that seek him, as that he himself is their reward; which eternally excludes all thoughts of merit in them that are so rewarded. Who can merit God to be his reward? Rewarding in God, especially where he himself is the reward, is an act of infinite grace and bounty. And this gives us full direction unto the object of faith here intended, namely, God in Christ, as revealed in the promise of him, giving himself unto believers as a reward (to be their God), in a way of infinite goodness and bounty. The proposal hereof is that alone which gives encouragement to come unto him, which the apostle designs to declare.

Τοῖς ἐκζητοῦσιν αὐτόν. 2dly. This further appears from the limitation of the object, or of those unto whom he is thus a rewarder; namely, such as "diligently seek him." Ζητεῖν, to "seek" the Lord, is used in general for any inquiry after him, from the light of nature or otherwise, Acts 17:27. But ἐκζητεῖν, the word here used by the apostle, argues a peculiar manner of seeking, whence we render it "diligently seek him." But this duty of seeking God is so frequently enjoined in the Scripture, and so declared to consist in faith acting itself in prayer, patience, and diligent attendance unto the ways of God's manifestation of himself in his ordinances of worship, that I shall not here insist upon it. Only I shall observe some things that are necessary unto the interpretation of the place.

(1st.) To seek God, is to do so according to some rule, guiding us both what way we are to go, and what we are to expect with him and from him. Those that sought him without such a rule, as the apostle tells them, did but strive εἰ ψηλαφήσειαν, to "feel after him," as men feel after a thing in the dark, when they know neither what it is nor how to come at it, Acts 17:27.

(2dly.) This rule neither is, nor ever was, nor can be, any other but the rule of God's covenant with us, and the revelation made of himself therein. In the state of original righteousness, man was bound to seek God (for this is eternally indispensable to all creatures, until we come to the full fruition of him) according to the tenor of the covenant of works. His seeking of God consisted in the faith and works of obedience required in that covenant. And there is now no way to seek God but according to the revelation that he hath made of himself in the covenant of grace, and the terms of obedience required therein. All other seeking of God is vain, and not prescribed unto us in a way of duty. All those who do attempt it do "wax vain in their imaginations, and their foolish hearts are darkened." When once we have the knowledge of this rule, when God hath revealed his covenant unto us, and the confirmation of it in Christ, all things are plain and clear, both how we may find God, and what we shall find in him.

(3dly.) This seeking of God is progressive, and hath various degrees. For there is, [1st.] Antecedent unto it, God's finding of us in a way of sovereign grace and mercy. So "he is found of them that sought him not," Isa. 65:1. And if he had not so sought us, we should never have sought after him; for "herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us" first. [2dly.] In itself, it takes in our first conversion unto God. To seek God, is to seek his grace and favour in Christ Jesus, to seek his kingdom and righteousness, to turn and adhere unto him in faith and love unfeigned. [3dly.] A diligent attendance unto all the ways of duty and obedience which he hath prescribed unto us. "Hearken to me, ye that follow after righteousness, ye that seek the LORD," Isa. 51:1. [4thly.] A patient waiting for the accomplishment of the promises, which the apostle so celebrates in Abraham. Wherefore,—

(4thly.) This diligent seeking of God, in them unto whom God will be a rewarder in a way of goodness and bounty, is an access unto him by faith, initial and progressive, according to the tenor of the covenant of grace in Christ Jesus, that we may find favour and acceptance with him. So did Abel seek God, when he offered a bloody sacrifice, in faith of the future propitiation by the Seed of

the woman. So did Enoch seek God, when he walked before him in covenant-obedience. Neither will God be such a rewarder as is here intended, he will not give himself as a reward unto any but those that seek him after this way.

Obs. IV. Those who seek God only according to the light of nature, do but feel after him in the dark, and they shall never find him as a rewarder, namely, such as is here described, though they may have pregnant notions of his justice, and of rewards and punishments according unto it.

Obs. V. Those who seek him according to the law of works, and by the best of their obedience thereunto, shall never find him as a rewarder, nor attain that which they seek after; as the apostle expressly declares, Rom. 9:31, 32.

I have insisted the longer on the exposition of this verse, both on the account of the important truths contained in it, as also because some of late have endeavoured to wrest this text, as they do other scriptures, as though it should teach that no other faith was required unto the justification of them of old but only an assent unto the being of God, and his wisdom, righteousness, and power, in governing the world with rewards and punishments; so to exclude all consideration of the promise of the Lord Christ and his mediation from their faith. So is the place expounded by Crellius, and Grotius who followeth him, with his admirers, and others that borrow falsehoods from them. But as that assent is supposed and included herein, as necessary unto all religion, so that it is what, and all that is here proposed and required, is consistent neither with the scope of the place, the design of the apostle, nor any expression in the text rightly understood. Observe,—

Obs. VI. It is the most proper act of faith, to come and cleave unto God as a rewarder in the way of grace and bounty, as proposing himself for our reward.

Obs. VII. That faith is vain which doth not put men on a diligent inquiry after God.

Obs. VIII. The whole issue of our finding of God when we seek him, depends on the way and rule which we take and use in our so doing.

Hebrews 11: 7

Noah is the third person mentioned in the Scripture, unto whom testimony was given in particular that "he was righteous;" and therefore the apostle produceth him in the third place, as an instance of the power and efficacy of faith, declaring also wherein his faith wrought and was effectual.

Ver. 7.—Πίστει χρηματισθεὶς Νῶε περὶ τῶν μηδέπω βλεπομένων, εὐλαβηθεὶς κατεσκεύασε κιβωτὸν εἰς σωτηρίαν τοῦ οἴκου αὐτοῦ· δι᾽ ἧς κατέκρινε τὸν κόσμον, καὶ τῆς κατὰ πίστιν δικαιοσύνης ἐγένετο κληρονόμος.

Χρηματισθείς. Vulg. Lat., "responso accepto;" Rhem., "having received an answer." Hence sundry expositors, who adhere unto that translation, inquire how Noah may be said to have an answer from God, whereas no mention is made of any inquiry of his in this matter. Some say, that Adam had foretold that the world should be twice destroyed, once by water, and again by fire. Hereon Noah inquired of God to know when the first of them should fall out, and received this answer, that it was now approaching. Some say, that "to answer," in Scripture, is ofttimes used for "to begin a speech unto another," when there was nothing spoken before; whereof they give instances. I mention these things only to show what needless pains men put themselves unto, out of a prejudicate adherence unto what may deceive them, as they do here, by following a false translation; for in the original word there is nothing that intimates an answer upon an inquiry. But the truth is, the translation hath not so much deceived them as they have deceived themselves. For "responsum" in Latin is a "divine oracle," and so used in all good authors. "Responsa deorum," "responsa Aruspicum," are oracular directions; and so is "responsum" absolutely. Syr., כַּד אִתְמַלֵל עִמֵּהּ, "when he was spoken to," "when there was a word with him." "Divinitus admonitus," as we say properly, "warned of God."

Περὶ τῶν μηδέπω βλεπομένων. Syr., "of those things which are not seen;" omitting μηδέπω, "nondum;" "nondum adhuc," as all other translations. Arab., "when it was revealed to Noah about things which yet were not seen."

Εὐλαβηθείς, "veritus," "reveritus," "metuens," "timuit," "venerabundus;" "fearing," he feared, "moved with fear," a reverential fear.

Κατεσκεύασε, "apparavit," he "prepared;" Vulg. Lat., "aptavit," he "fitted" by preparing and making of it; Syr., עֲבַד, "fecit," "condidit;" he "made" or "built" an ark.

Εἰς σωτηρίαν τοῦ οἴκου αὐτοῦ. Syr., לְחַיֵּא דַּבָּנֵי בַּיְתֵהּ, "unto the lives" (that is, the saving of the lives) "of the sons of his house" or family.

Ver. 7.—By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not as yet seen, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.

Chrysostom well commends this instance of the apostle, in that it not only gives a demonstration of the efficacy of faith on the one hand, in Noah, but also of the effect and consequent of unbelief on the other, in the whole world besides. Hence the application of this example was exceedingly seasonable and proper unto these Hebrews, who stood now on their trial of what they would follow and abide by. Here they might see, as in a glass, what would be the effect of the one and the other.

There is in the words, 1. The person spoken of or instanced in; which is Noah. 2. What is affirmed of him; that he was "warned of God of things not yet seen." 3. The effect hereof by faith: (1.) Internal, in himself; he was "moved with fear:" (2.) External, in obedience; he "built an ark." 4. The consequent of his so doing: (1.) The saving of his own family; (2.) The condemnation of the world; (3.) His own becoming an "heir of the righteousness which is by faith."

1. The person spoken of is Noah, concerning whom some things may be observed that relate unto the sense of the place.

(1.) Being designed of God unto the great work which he was to be called unto, to live and act at that time and that season wherein God would destroy the world for sin, he had his name given him by a spirit of prophecy. His father, Lamech, called him נֹחַ; whereof he gave this reason, זֶה יְנַחֲמֵנוּ,—"This shall comfort us concerning our work and toil of our hands, because of the ground which the LORD hath cursed," Gen. 5:29. He foresaw that by him, and in his days, relief would come from the effects of the curse: which there did, [1.] In the just destruction of the wicked world, whereon the earth for a while had rest from its bondage under which it groaned, Rom. 8; [2.] In that in him the promise of the blessed Seed should be preserved, whence all rest and comfort do proceed. But either the name of נֹחַ is not derived from נוּחַ, "to rest," or "cause to rest," but from נִחַם, "to comfort," mem being rejected in the framing of the name; or else there is not in the words of Lamech, זֶה יְנַחֲמֵנוּ, "This same shall comfort us," a respect unto the etymology of the word, but an expression of the thing signified.

(2.) As unto his state and condition antecedent unto what is here declared of him, two things are affirmed: [1.] That he "found grace in the eyes of the LORD," Gen. 6:8. [2.] That he was "just, perfect in his generations, and walked with God," verse 9. He was accepted with God, justified, and walked in acceptable obedience, before he was thus divinely warned, with what followed thereon. Wherefore these things did not belong unto his first believing, but

unto the exercise of that faith which he had before received. Nor was he then first made an "heir of righteousness," but declared so to be, as Abraham was justified when he offered Isaac his son.

(3.) His employment in the world was, that he was "a preacher of righteousness," 2 Pet. 2:5;—that is, of the righteousness of God by faith; and of righteousness by repentance and obedience among men. And there is no doubt but that before, and whilst he was building the ark, he was urgent with mankind to call them to repentance, by declaring the promises and threatenings of God. And in a blessed state he was, to be a preacher of righteousness unto others, and an heir of righteousness in himself.

(4.) He is said to be ὄγδοος, 2 Pet. 2:5, "the eighth person." But whereas Enoch was "the seventh from Adam," and he the third from Enoch, he could not be the eighth, but was the tenth on the line of genealogy from Adam. He is therefore called the eighth, because he was the head of the eight that were saved, the other seven depending on him, and saved by him; unless we shall suppose him to be called the eighth preacher of righteousness,—that is, from Enosh, when the separation was first made between the wicked and the godly, and wickedness increasing, those who feared God began publicly to preach repentance, Gen. 4:26.

Χρηματισθείς. 2. That which is affirmed of him is, that he was "warned of God of things not as yet seen." Χρηματίζω, is "to give an answer with authority," by kings or magistrates unto ambassadors or orators. It is noted by Plutarch, that it was one cause of the conspiracy against Caesar, that he miscarried herein: Προσιόντων δὲ ὑπάτων καὶ στρατηγῶν, ἅμα δὲ καὶ τῆς βουλῆς ἑπομένης, οὐχ ὑπεξαναστὰς, ἀλλj ὥσπερ ἰδιώταις χρηματίζων ἀπεκρίνατο·—"The consuls, with the praetors and the whole senate following them, coming to him, he arose not, but spake as unto a company of private men." And χρηματίζομαι is used in the Scripture in a common sense, to be "called" or named, Acts 11:26; Rom. 7:3. But its more frequent use is for a divine warning, Matt. 2:12, 22; Luke 2:26; Acts 10:22; Heb. 8:5. And χρηματισμός is a divine oracle, Rom. 11:4. And it is used to express any kind of divine revelation; as by inspiration of the Holy Ghost, Luke 2:26; by the ministry of angels, Acts 10:22; by dreams, Matt. 2:12, 22; by an immediate voice of God, Rom. 11:4.

And this warning of God was no other but that which is recorded Gen. 6:13–16. And there were two parts of it, the first minatory, or a declaration of the purpose of God to destroy the whole world, verse 13. The second is directory, of

what he required of him in making an ark, verses 14–16. Accordingly, as we shall see, it had a twofold effect on Noah; the first, of fear in himself from the threatening; the other of obedience, in building the ark according to direction. Both parts of this divine warning were of "things not yet seen."

Περὶ τῶν μηδέπω βλεπομένων. Things of this sort, namely, "things not seen," he had before declared to be the proper object of faith, verse 1. But the things here intended were not in their own nature invisible; they were sufficiently seen when they did exist. Μηδέπω. Therefore the apostle saith, they were "not yet seen;" namely, the flood, and the saving of himself in an ark. These were not seen when Noah was warned about them, nor in a hundred years after. They were seen neither in themselves nor in their causes. For although in the morally procuring cause of the flood, namely, the wickedness of the world, it was present, yet there was nothing then to be seen or learned of its destruction by a flood: and efficient cause it had none, but the invisible power of God. Wherefore it was a pure act of faith in Noah, to believe that which he had no evidence for, but by divine revelation; especially considering that the thing itself revealed was in itself strange, direful, and unto human reason every way incredible. And we may observe,—

Obs. I. It is a high commendation to faith, to believe things, on the word of God, that in themselves and all second causes are invisible, and seem impossible, Rom. 4:17–21.

Obs. II. No obstacle can stand in the way of faith, when it fixeth itself on the almighty power of God, and his infinite veracity, Rom. 11:23; Tit. 1:2.

Obs. III. It is a great encouragement and strengthening unto faith, when the things which it believes as promised or threatened are suitable unto the properties of the divine nature, his righteousness, holiness, goodness, and the like, such as it becometh God to do. Such was the destruction of the world, when it was filled with wickedness and violence.

Obs. IV. We have here a pledge of the certain accomplishment of all divine threatenings against ungodly sinners and enemies of the church, though the time of it may be yet far distant, and the means of it inevident. Unto this end is this example made use of, 2 Pet. 2:5.

3. Of this warning of God given unto Noah,—

Πίστει. (1.) The first effect, as we observed, respected the first part of the warning, which was a threatening of total destruction. He was "moved with fear." And here faith in its efficacy begins to take place. For although he may be

said to be warned of God through faith, inasmuch as he became accepted with God by faith, whereon he received the especial favour of this divine warning; yet here respect seems to be had unto the effect which it had in Noah, with the consequents thereof. "By faith he ... was moved with fear." His believing the word of God had this effect on him.

Εὐλαβηθείς. Of the meaning of the word, see the exposition on chap. 5:7. A reverential fear it is of God's threatenings, and not an anxious, solicitous fear of the evil threatened. In the warning given him, he considered the greatness, the holiness, and the power of God, with the vengeance becoming those holy properties of his nature, which he threatened to bring on the world. Seeing God by faith under this representation of him, he was filled with a reverential fear of him. See Hab. 3:16; Ps. 119:120; Mal. 2:5.

Neither is this fear that effect wherein his faith did ultimately acquiesce, but he used it only as a means unto the further end of obedience in building the ark; and therefore we render it, "moved with fear." This fear, which arose from faith, was used by the same faith to excite and stir him up unto his duty. And therefore this reverential fear of God is frequently in the Scripture used for the whole worship of God, and all the obedience required of us; because it is a continual motive unto it, and a means of a due performance of it. So then,—

Obs. V. A reverential fear of God, as threatening vengeance unto impenitent sinners, is a fruit of saving faith, and acceptable unto God. See the exposition on chap. 4:1.

Obs. VI. It is one thing to fear God as threatening, with a holy reverence; another to be afraid of the evil threatened, merely as it is penal and destructive, which the worst of men cannot avoid.

Obs. VII. Faith produceth various effects in the minds of believers, according to the variety of objects that it is fixed on; sometimes joy and confidence, sometimes fear and reverence.

Obs. VIII. Then is fear a fruit of faith, when it engageth us unto diligence in our duty; as it did here in Noah: "being moved by fear, he prepared an ark."

(2.) This was the second effect of his faith, with respect unto the second part of the divine warning, "Make thee an ark," Gen. 6:14. God said unto him, "Make thee an ark;" and in compliance with that command and direction, it is here said that he "prepared an ark."

Κατεσκεύασε. The word here used is variously rendered, as we have showed. Our translation, by "prepared," is proper; for it compriseth all that Noah did, from the first provision unto the last finishing of it. All the preparation of materials, all their disposition into a fabric by divine direction, and the finishing of them in their order, are comprised in this word. And we may observe about it,—

Κιβωτόν. [1.] That the preparing, building, and finishing of this vessel, meet to swim in the water,—which, from the Hebrew תֵּבָה, the Greeks rendered κιβωτός, the Latins arca, and we from them, an "ark,"—was a thing new in the earth, great, requiring labour and expense in a long continuance of time; as is supposed, an hundred and twenty years. And a strange thing no doubt it was in the world, to see a man with so great an endeavour build a ship where there was no water near him.

[2.] During the preparation of this ark he continued to preach righteousness and repentance unto the inhabitants of the world; nor could it be avoided, but that he must, in what he did, let them know in what way they should be destroyed if they did not repent.

[3.] In this state of things, the Scripture observeth three things concerning the inhabitants of the old world: 1st. That they were disobedient; they did not repent, they did not return unto God upon his preaching, and the striving of the Spirit of Christ with them therein, 1 Pet. 3:19, 20. For which cause they were not only temporally destroyed, but shut up in the everlasting prison. 2dly. That they were secure, not having the least thought, fear, or expectation of the destruction which he denounced approaching to them, being not moved with his threatenings to the last hour: Matt. 24:38, 39, "They knew not until the flood came, and took them all away." 3dly. That they were scoffers, as is plainly intimated, 2 Pet. 3:3–6. They scorned and derided Noah, both in his preaching and his building.

And we may hence further observe,—

Obs. IX. That all these things tend unto the commendation of the faith of Noah. Neither the difficulty, nor the length of the work itself, nor his want of success in preaching, as unto their repentance and conversion to God, nor the contempt and scorn which were cast upon him by the whole world, did weaken or discourage him in the least from going on with the work and duty

whereunto he was divinely called. A great precedent and example it was unto all who may be called to bear testimony for God in times of difficulty and opposition.

Obs. X. We have here an eminent figure of the state of impenitent sinners, and God's dealing with them, in all ages: (1.) When their sins are coming to the height, he gives them a peculiar time and space for repentance, with sufficient evidence that it is a season granted for that end. (2.) During this space the long-suffering of God waits for their conversion; and he makes it known that it doth so. (3.) He allows them the outward means of conversion, as he did to the old world in the preaching of Noah. (4.) He warns them in particular of the judgments that are approaching them, which they cannot escape; as he did by the building of the ark. And such are the dealings of God with impenitent sinners in some measure and proportion in all ages. They, on the other side, in such a season, (1.) Continue disobedient under the most effectual means of conversion. No means shall be effectual unto that end, Isa. 6:9–12. And when the preaching of righteousness loseth its efficacy in the conversion of sinners, it is a token of approaching desolations. (2.) They are secure as unto any fear, or expectation of judgments; and shall be so until they are overwhelmed in them, Rev. 18:7, 8. (3.) There are always amongst them scoffers, that deride all that are moved with fear at the threatenings of God, and behave themselves accordingly; which is an exact portraiture of the present condition of the world.

4. Of this faith of Noah, and the fruits of it in fear and obedience,—

Εἰς σωτηρίαν τοῦ οἴκου αὐτοῦ. (1.) The immediate effect was the saving of his family. He did it "to the saving of his household;" that is, he himself, his wife, his three sons, and their wives,—that is, such as on the foresight of the flood they had espoused, for probably they came not together in conjugal duties until after the flood, for they had no child until then, Gen. 10:1, and eight persons only were to be saved.

This family, God in sovereign grace and mercy would preserve and deliver, principally to continue the conveyance of the promised Seed, which was to be produced from Adam, Luke 3:38, and was not, in the immutable counsel of God, liable to an intercision; which it would have been if God had destroyed all mankind, and created a new race of them upon the earth: and in the next place, for the continuation and propagation of a church, to be brought unto God by virtue of that promise.

And in this saving of the family of Noah by the ark, we have a figure of God's saving and preserving a remnant in all ages, when desolating judgments have destroyed apostatized churches and nations. So the apostle Peter declares with respect unto the vengeance and overwhelming destruction that was coming on the apostatized church of the Jews: 1 Pet. 3:20, 21, "The ark, wherein few, that is eight souls, were saved by water. The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us."

I deny not but that there is a great allusion in general between salvation by the ark and that by baptism, inasmuch as the one did represent and the other doth exhibit Christ himself. But the apostle hath a particular design in this comparison. For judgment by a universal destruction was then coming on the whole church and people of the Jews, but God would save a few by baptism,—that is, their initiation into gospel faith and repentance, whereby they were separated from the perishing infidels, and were really and actually delivered from the destruction that befell them; as Noah and his family were in the ark. So then,—

Obs. XI. The visible, professing church shall never fall into such an apostasy, nor be so totally destroyed, but that God will preserve a remnant, for a seed to future generations, Isa. 6:11–13; Rom. 9:27; Rev. 18:4.

Δι᾽ ἧς. (2.) Lastly, There is a double consequent of this faith of Noah and his obedience therein; [1.] With respect unto the world, "he condemned it;" [2.] With respect unto himself, he "became heir of the righteousness which is by faith." Both these are ascribed unto Noah. And the way whereby he did them is expressed in these words, "By the which." That is, say some, "by which ark;" others, "by which faith;" for the relative agrees with either of these antecedents. I shall not contend about it. The meaning is, by the which faith, acting and evidencing itself in the building of the ark, these things were wrought.

Κατέκρινεν τὸν κόσμον. [1.] He "condemned the world." Not as the judge of it, properly and authoritatively; but as an advocate and a witness, by plea and testimony. He condemned it by his doctrine, by his obedience, by his example, by his faith in them all. He did so, 1st. In that he justified God. God had had a long contest with the world,—"his Spirit strove with them;" and now in the issue, after much patience and forbearance, he was coming to destroy them. Herein "God would be justified in his sayings, and overcome when he was judged," as the apostle speaks, Rom. 3:4. This was done by Noah: he cleared and justified God in his threatenings and the execution of them; and therein

condemned the world as guilty, and justly deserving the punishment inflicted on it. 2dly. He condemned the world by casting a weighty aggravation on its guilt, in that he believed and obeyed when they refused so to do. It was not any thing evil, grievous, or impossible, that was required of them, but what he gave them an example of in himself; which greatly aggravated their sin. So is the expression used, Matt. 12:41, "The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here." Their example being not followed, did aggravate the guilt of that generation. 3dly. He condemned the world, by leaving it utterly without excuse. He that takes away the principal plea that a guilty person can make in his own defence, may justly be said to condemn him. And this Noah did towards the old world. He left them no pretence that they had not been warned of their sin and approaching ruin; so as that they had nothing to plead for themselves why the execution of judgment should be respited for one moment. 4thly. He condemned the world, by approving of the vengeance that befell them, though very severe. So shall the saints judge and condemn fallen angels at the last day, 1 Cor. 6:3. And we may observe, that—

Obs. XII. Those whom God calleth unto, fitteth for, and employeth in any work, are therein συνεργοὶ Θεοῦ, "co-workers with God," 1 Cor. 3:9; 2 Cor. 6:1: so as that what God doth himself efficiently, is ascribed unto them instrumentally, as working with him, and for him. So the preachers of the word do save men, 1 Tim. 4:16; and so are they said to condemn them.

Obs. XIII. Let those that are employed in the declaration of God's promises and threatenings take heed unto themselves, to answer the will of him by whom they are employed, whose work it is wherein they are engaged.

Obs. XIV. It ought to be a motive unto diligence in exemplary obedience, that therein we bear testimony for God against the impenitent world, which he will judge and punish.

Τῆς κατὰ πίστιν δικαιοσύνης. [2.] The last thing in the words, or the second consequent of his faith and obedience, is, that he "became heir of the righteousness which is by faith."

What the righteousness here intended is, the "righteousness of faith," is so fully declared by the apostle in all his other writings, and so laid down in the close of the foregoing chapter, that there can be no question about it. The nature of this righteousness, with the way of attaining it, I have so fully

manifested in my treatise of Justification, that I shall not at all here speak to it. He calls it elsewhere, sometimes "the righteousness of God" absolutely, sometimes "the righteousness of God which is by faith," sometimes "the gift of righteousness by Christ," sometimes "the righteousness of faith," or "the righteousness which is by faith," as in this place. In all which our free, gratuitous justification by the righteousness of Christ, imputed unto us by faith, or through believing, is intended. This Noah obtained by faith. For that in this faith of the patriarchs no respect was had unto Christ and his righteousness, is such a putid figment, so destructive of the first promise and all true faith in the church of old, so inconsistent with and contrary to the design of the apostle, and utterly destroying the whole force of his argument, as we shall show afterwards that it deserves no consideration.

Grotius and his follower say, "That Noah, as a reward of his faith, was left possessor of the whole earth, as an inheritance unto him and his children;" which is a wild exposition of being an "heir of the righteousness of faith," and needs no confutation.

Ἐγένετο κληρονόμος. The way whereby he obtained this righteousness is, that he was made the "heir" of it. Some say 'he is so called and said to be because this righteousness utterly failing in the old world before the flood, it was left in Noah as his right and inheritance, which he carried along with him into the new world after the flood. Righteousness did not utterly perish; Noah had a title unto it, and continued in the possession of it.'

But there is somewhat more in this expression. The way whereby we come to be made partakers of this righteousness, is by gratuitous adoption. This is by faith, John 1:12. Whatever we receive upon or by virtue of our adoption belongs unto our inheritance; thereof we are heirs. See Rom. 8:15–17. So in justification, forgiveness of sin and the inheritance go together, Acts 26:18. And this inheritance is by the promise, not by the law or works, Gal. 3:18, 19; Rom. 4:14. Wherefore Noah was the "heir of the righteousness which is by faith," in that by free adoption, through faith, he came to have an interest in and right unto the righteousness which is tendered in the promise, whereby it is conveyed unto us as an inheritance. And whereas it is said that he "became" so, if respect be had unto his faith in building of the ark, the meaning is, that he was then evidenced and declared so to be. As Abraham was said to be "justified when he offered Isaac," who was personally justified long before; so also was Noah, by the testimony of God himself, before he was warned to build an ark. And we may learn,—

Obs. XV. That all right unto spiritual privileges and mercies is by gratuitous adoption.

Obs. XVI. That the righteousness of faith is the best inheritance for thereby we become "heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ."

Hebrews 11: 8

The apostle hath now passed over the first period of Scripture records, namely, from the beginning of the world unto the flood; and therein he hath considered the examples of all concerning whom it is testified in particular that they "pleased God," and were accepted with him in their obedience. And two things he proves from them with respect unto his present purpose: 1. That they all pleased God and were righteous by faith. 2. That their faith was effectual to secure them in that state of divine favour, by enabling them unto all duties of obedience, notwithstanding the difficulties and oppositions which they met withal. Hereby he makes good his design with respect unto these Hebrews, namely, to convince them that if they did not persevere in their profession, it was because of their unbelief, for that true faith would certainly carry them through with constancy and perseverance, whatever difficulties they should meet withal, giving them encouragement from what it wrought in others from the beginning.

Hence he proceeds unto the next period of time, from the flood, and the renovation of the world in the family of Noah, unto the giving of the law; so to manifest that in every state of the church the way of pleasing God was one and the same; as also, that faith still retained its efficacy under all alterations.

He who, in this period of time, is first testified unto in the Scripture, is he whose example on all accounts was most forcible with these Hebrews, which he had before at large proposed unto them and insisted on, chap. 6:11–15; the exposition of which place may be consulted, to give light to this context. This is Abraham; whose example, by reason of the eminency of his person, the relation of the Hebrews unto him, from whom they derived all their privileges temporal and spiritual, the efficacy of his faith, with the various successful exercises of it, he declares and urgeth at large from hence unto the end of the 19th verse.

Ver. 8—Πίστει καλούμενος Ἀβραὰμ ὑπήκουσεν ἐξελθεῖν εἰς τὸν τόπον ὃν ἤμελλε λαμβάνειν εἰς κληρονομίαν, καὶ ἐξῆλθε μὴ ἐπισταμένος ποῦ ἔρχεται.

Καλούμενος Ἀβραάμ. Vulg. Lat., "qui vocatur Abraham;" Rhem., "he who is called Abraham:" which can no way be reconciled unto the text. Those who will adhere unto that translation do suppose that the change of his name is here intimated, when from Abram he was called Abraham: but that is not "vocatus," but "cognominatus;" not καλούμενος, but προσαγορευθείς. And if καλούμενος were ever used in such a sense, as it is not, it should have been ὃς ἐκλήθη, and not καλούμενος, without any article. Besides, as the apostle had no reason to speak of Abraham in that manner, "he who is called Abraham," as if he were a person but little known to them, so this interpretation takes away the whole foundation of the faith of Abraham, and of all the effects of it, and so of the whole argument of the apostle, which was his divine call, which he refers unto. Wherefore all other translations avoid this mistake. Syr., כַּד אֶתְקְרִי, "when he was called." "Evocatus," "called forth."

Ὑπήκουσεν ἐξελθεῖν, "obedivit exire," "obeyed to go forth." Syr., "dicta audiens fuit," "auscultavit ut exiret," "ut abiret," "ut emigraret;" "hearkened," "obeyed to go forth," "to wander away." Some supply "Deo" to "auscultavit;" which may be better supplied to "called," "called of God."

Our English translation makes a transposition of the words: instead of, "he obeyed to go forth" unto the place, it refers ἐξελθεῖν, "to go forth," unto καλούμενος, being "called to go out" unto a place; and so refers "obeyed" afterwards not only to the call of Abraham, but also unto what he did in compliance therewithal.

Ὑπήκουσεν, "auscultavit," "dicto audivit;" a word proper to answer καλούμενος: "being called," he so "heard" as to yield obedience. So "to hearken or hear" is frequently used in the Scripture.

Ver. 8.—By faith Abraham, being called [of God], obeyed to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance; and he went out, not knowing whither he went.

In Abraham there was a foundation laid of a new state of the church after the flood, more excellent than that which preceded. He was the first also after the flood unto whom testimony was given in particular that he pleased God. He was the progenitor of the Hebrews, from whom they derived all their privileges, in whose person they were initiated into the covenant, with a right unto the promises. He was also by promise "the father of all that believe." And therefore it was the great concernment of those Hebrews then, and is so now of us, to consider aright the example of his faith and obedience.

Designing to give many illustrious instances of the power and efficacy of the faith of Abraham, the apostle begins with that which was the beginning and foundation of them all, namely, the call of God, and his compliance therewithal.

And the nature, life, and power of faith, are represented in three words in this instance: πίστει, καλούμενος, ὑπήκουσε. It respects the call of God, which it rests upon, and which it is resolved into; and it acts itself in obedience to all the commands of God. This alone is that faith which the apostle celebrates, and whereunto he ascribes the great effect of our pleasing God.

In the words of the verse there is proposed unto us, 1. The foundation of the faith and obedience of Abraham, which was his call of God. 2. What he was called unto, which was a journey or pilgrimage; described, (1.) By the term from whence he went, "go out;" and, (2.) From the term whither he went, "unto a place," etc. 3. The exercise of his faith, and the effects of it, "he obeyed." 4. The commendation of his faith, from the difficulty wherewith his obedience was accompanied, with respect unto what he was called unto, "not knowing," etc.

Καλούμενος. First, He was "called;" that is, of God, by an immediate word of command from him.

1. He did it not without a command. He did not leave all his present satisfactions, he did not put himself on innumerable hazards for the future, merely of his own accord. Had he not had a divine call, there had been no work for faith. Where there is no call from God, there can be no faith or trust in God. Where the call is general, as in our ordinary occasions, so is our faith in God, resigning all circumstances unto his disposal; but this especial call of Abraham required a special faith.

2. Concerning this call of Abraham, there are many difficulties arising from the record of it, Gen. 12:1–3, with its repetition by Stephen, Acts 7:2–4. For Gen. 12, it is reported as made after the death of Terah, his father, in Haran, chap. 11:31, 32; by Stephen it is assigned unto his being in Mesopotamia, before he left the land of the Chaldees. Besides, Haran, or Charran, was in Mesopotamia; where, in the relation of Stephen, he is said to dwell after he left Mesopotamia. Wherefore some say he was twice called, once in the land of the Chaldees, and again in Haran. Others say his call was but one; but then some say it was at Ur of the Chaldees, before he first went thence with his father; others, at Haran, after his father's death.

It will not consist with my design, nor the nature of an exposition, to insist at large on these things. Some few observations will clear the whole difficulty, so far as is necessary unto our purpose; as,—

(1.) Mesopotamia is in good authors sometimes taken largely for all that part of Asia which is separated from Syria by the river Euphrates, comprehending both Assyria and Chaldea; and sometimes strictly and properly for the country between the two rivers of Euphrates and Tigris, whence it hath its denomination. Hence, when Stephen affirms that "the God of glory appeared unto Abraham in Mesopotamia," he takes it in the largest sense, comprehending Chaldea, wherein Ur was, as is plain, verses 2, 4. And Abraham coming thence unto Haran, came into a city of Mesopotamia properly so called, and that near to Euphrates, which he was to pass over into Syria.

(2.) By assigning the appearance of God unto Abraham before he left the land of the Chaldees, Stephen directly affirms his call to have been whilst he was there, before he departed with his father and came to Haran. And this is evident from the story in Moses, when it is said that he and his father "went forth from Ur of the Chaldees, to go into the land of Canaan," Gen. 11:31; for they could have no design to leave their native country, with all their possessions and relations, to go into so remote and unknown a country, without some especial call and direction from God.

(3.) Wherefore those words of Moses, וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־אַבְרָם, Gen. 12:1, are well rendered by our translators, "Now the LORD had said unto Abram;" that is, he had so whilst he was in Ur of the Chaldees, before he and his father departed thence to go into the land of Canaan, chap. 11:31. And because this call had no respect unto Terah, but unto Abraham only, Moses first records his journey with his father toward Canaan, and then, on the death of his father, takes up again and particularly expresseth his call, chap. 12:1. The pursuit whereof from thence he distinctly declares.

(4.) And this is evident from the call itself, "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house," Gen. 12:1. For Abraham had all these in Ur of the Chaldees, and not in Haran.

Wherefore this call of Abraham was but one, and given at once; namely, whilst he was in Ur of the Chaldees, before his going out from thence with his father, and the death of his father thereon; which place Stephen reckons to Mesopotamia in the large notation of it. And this one call is particularly recorded, Gen. 12:1–3, after the death of Terah, when he only remained who was

alone concerned therein. But the reader may see these things fully discoursed, with a just reconciliation of Moses with Stephen, in our Exercitations on the first volume of the Exposition, Exerc. xix.

Of this call of Abraham there were two parts: (1.) A command, Gen. 12:1, "Get thee out of thy country," etc. (2.) A promise, verses 2, 3, "And I will make of thee," etc. Of this promise there were two parts: [1.] A temporal blessing, in the multiplication of his seed, verse 2. [2.] A spiritual blessing, in confining the promised blessing Seed unto him and his family, in whom all the families of the earth were to be blessed, verse 3. And it is a thing most absurd, and contrary to the whole design of the Scripture and the dispensation of the covenant, to confine the faith of Abraham unto the land of Canaan, and the glory of his posterity therein. For the life of the promise made unto him on his call, whereby his faith was animated, was in the blessing of all the families of the earth in him; which was in Christ alone, the promised seed, as all but infidels must confess.

Ἐξελθεῖν. Secondly, The apostle takes notice only of the first part of the call, namely, the command. And therein two things are considerable: 1. From what he was to go and depart. 2. What he was to go unto. He was to go out: καλούμενος ἐξελθεῖν. He was "called to go out;" so our translation disposeth the words: or, being called, ὑπήκουσεν ἐξελθεῖν, "he obeyed to go out," or "in going out," as they lie in the original. They are both to the same purpose. In the latter way, "obeyed" is immediately referred to faith; in the former, "going out" is so; his faith wrought by obedience in his going out.

1. It is said he was "called to go out." From whence and from what, we are referred unto the story: Gen. 12:1, "Get thee" (לְךָ־לְךָ, "vade tibi") "out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house;"—that is, 'leave and forsake all things that are pleasant, useful, desirable unto thee;' for these three things, "country, kindred, and father's house," comprise them all. And they fall under two considerations: (1.) As man is naturally inclined to the love of them, to adhere unto them, to value them and delight in them. These are the things which, by all sorts of circumstances, do from their nativity insinuate themselves into the minds and affections of men, so as that they cannot be separated from them without the greatest convulsions of nature. And we have the testimony of mankind hereunto, with sundry instances of such as have preferred these things before their own lives. (2.) They may be considered as useful and beneficial unto life and the comforts of it. Whatever is so, is contained in these things. Whereas, therefore, natural affection and sense of

usefulness unto all the advantages and comforts of life, are the two cords that bind us unto any thing whatever, the forsaking of all things that fall under both of them, must needs proceed from some great cause and efficacious impulse.

This, therefore, commends the faith of Abraham in the first place, and evinceth the powerful efficacy of faith in general, that under its conduct, in obedience unto the call of God, he could and did relinquish all these things,—cast out their insinuations into his affections, and break the cords of delight and interest which they cast upon him. And we may see herein that,—

Obs. I. It becomes the infinite greatness and all-satisfactory goodness of God, at the very first revelation of himself unto any of his creatures, to require of them a renunciation of all other things, and their interest in them, in compliance with his commands.—'Get thee away from country, friends, relations, and enjoyments,' is a command becoming the greatness of God. "I am the LORD thy God," is his first word unto us. And the next is, ' "Thou shalt have no other gods but me,"—with me, before me, besides me,—nothing to be in my place, in comparison of me, in competition with me; forsake all, and be mine only.' Unless we have a sense of that greatness of God which makes such commands alone to become him, we yield no obedience unto him in a due manner.

Obs. II. The power of sovereign grace in calling men to God, and the mighty efficacy of faith complying therewithal.—Whilst Abraham lived with his father on the other side of the river, "they served other gods," Josh. 24:2, or were engaged in the superstition and idolatry then prevalent in the world. And the minds of men being once thoroughly infected with them, as having received them by tradition from their fathers, are very hardly recovered from their snares. In this state he had all worldly accommodations that his own country, kindred, and inheritance, could afford him; yet such was the powerful efficacy of sovereign grace in his call by God, that it enabled him by faith to relinquish and renounce them all, and to betake himself at once unto a new state and condition, both as unto things temporal and eternal. It is well if all of us who make profession of the same faith, have an experience of the same grace.

Obs. III. It is the call of God alone that makes a distinction amongst mankind, as unto faith and obedience, with all the effects of them.—Abraham thus believed and obeyed God, because he was called; and he was called, not because he was better or wiser than others, but because it pleased God to call him and not others, 1 Cor. 1:26–31.

Obs. IV. The church of believers consists of those that are called out of the world.—The call of Abraham is a pattern of the call of the church, Ps. 45:10; 2 Cor. 6:17, 18.

Obs. V. Self-denial, in fact or resolution, is the foundation of all sincere profession.—This Abraham began his profession in the practice of, and proceeded unto the height in the greatest instances imaginable. And the instruction that our Saviour gives herein, Matt. 10:37, 38, 16:24, 25, amounts but unto this, 'If you intend to have the faith of Abraham, with the fruits and blessings attending it, you must lay the foundation of it in self-denial, and the relinquishment of all things, if called thereunto, as he did.' Wherefore, the faith of Abraham being everywhere in the Scripture set up as the measure and standard of the faith of believers in all ages, and the apostle in this place giving us an account of the beginning and progress of it for our example, there is nothing that belongs more directly unto the exposition of the place than a due observation of its nature, actings, and effects, for our instruction, without which the mind of the Holy Ghost in the context is not understood; though expositors take very little notice of these things. Now, the foundation of the whole is laid herein, that the first act of saving faith consists in the discovery and sight of the infinite greatness, goodness, and other excellencies of the divine nature, so as to judge it our duty, upon his call, his command and promise, to deny ourselves, to relinquish all things, and to do so accordingly.

2. We have seen what Abraham was called from: the next thing in the words is, what he was called unto; namely, "a place which he should after receive for an inheritance."

Τὸν τόπον. He was not called merely to forsake the place where he was, and then left to rove and wander up and down uncertainly; but he was called unto a certain place. For it so falls out many times, that men, wearied by one means or another, (as convictions or afflictions,) of their present spiritual state and condition, so as to have a mind to relinquish it, yet having no discovery of another, of a better state, with rest in Christ by the gospel, they rove up and

down in their minds and affections for a season, and then return to the state or place from which they came out, (which the patriarchs refused to do, verse 15,) or else perish in their wanderings.

This place whereunto he went is described by his future relation unto it and interest in it; he was "afterwards to receive it for an inheritance." At present he received it not, but only in right and title, nor during his life. He, nor his posterity for some generations, had no inheritance in it; only he bought a burying-place in it of the children of Heth, whereby he took seizin of the whole. But he received it afterwards in his posterity, as is known.

Λαμβάνειν. And he is said to "receive" it. It was given unto him, bestowed on him by way of a free gift, or donation. He did only "receive" it. And so it is with respect unto all good things betwixt God and us; he is the free donor of them, we are but passive recipients.

Εἰς κληρονομίαν. And he received this country "for an inheritance." And unto an inheritance there is required right and title unto it, that a man may be a lawful possessor of it. Now, this country was before possessed by others, who enjoyed it by a prescription from its first plantation. But God, as the great possessor of heaven and earth, as the sovereign Lord of all things, transferred their right and title unto that land, and invested it in Abraham. So it is frequently repeated, that God gave them this or that land.

Obs. VI. There is no right, title, or possession, that can prescribe against the righteousness of God in the disposal of all inheritances here below at his pleasure.—Whatever single persons, whatever whole nations, may think or boast of their title and right, as unto God, they are all but tenants at will and pleasure. He can disinherit and disseize them of all as he sees good; and when he will do so, (as he gives instances of his so doing in all ages,) no plea will be admitted against his right, and the exercise of it. So do kings hold their crowns, nations their soil, and private men their possessions.

Obs. VII. God's grant of things unto any is the best of titles, and most sure against all pretences or impeachments. Judg. 11:24, 'We will possess what the LORD our God gives us to possess.'

Obs. VIII. Possession belongs unto an inheritance enjoyed.—This God gave unto Abraham in his posterity, with a mighty hand and stretched-out arm; and he divided it unto them by lot.

Obs. IX. An inheritance is capable of a limited season. The title unto it may be continued unto a prefixed period. So was ill with this inheritance; for although it is called an "everlasting inheritance," yet it was so only on two accounts: (1.) That it was typical of that heavenly inheritance which is eternal. (2.) Because, as unto right and title, it was to be continued unto the end of that limited perpetuity which God granted unto the church-state in that land; that is, unto the coming of the promised Seed, in whom all nations should be blessed, which the call and faith of Abraham did principally regard. Until that time was expired, although many incursions were made into and upon this inheritance of Abraham, yet were all that made them oppressors; and they were punished for their usurpation. But when the grant of it to them expired, and those wicked tenants of God's vineyard forfeited their right unto it by their unbelief, and murdering of the true Heir, God disinherited them, dispossessed them, and left them neither right nor title to, nor any interest in this inheritance; as it is at this day. It is no more the inheritance of Abraham; but in Christ he is become "heir of the world," and his spiritual posterity enjoy all the privileges of it.

Wherefore the grant of this land, for an inheritance unto Abraham in his posterity, had a season limited unto it. Upon the expiration of that term, their right and title unto it were cancelled and disannulled. And thereon God in his providence sent the armies of the Romans to dispossess them; which they did accordingly, unto this day. Nor have the present Jews any more or better title unto the land of Canaan than unto any other country in the world. Nor shall their title be renewed thereunto upon their conversion unto God. For the limitation of their right was unto that time wherein it was typical of the heavenly inheritance: that now ceasing for ever, there can be no especial title unto it revived. And we see herein,—

Obs. X. That it is faith alone that gives the soul satisfaction in future rewards in the midst of present difficulties and distresses.—So it did to Abraham, who, in the whole course of his pilgrimage, attained nothing of this promised inheritance. And,—

Obs. XI. The assurance given us by divine promises is sufficient to encourage us unto the most difficult course of obedience.

Thirdly, The last thing in the words is, the commendation of the faith of Abraham, from his ignorance of the place whither he was to go upon the call of God. He had only said unto him that he should go into a land that he would show him, Gen. 12:1.

Μὴ ἐπισταμενος. 1. But of what nature the land was, how or by whom inhabited, or what way he was to go into it, he told him not. It should seem, indeed, that God had told him from the beginning that it was the land of Canaan which he designed; for when he first left Ur of the Chaldees, he steered his course towards Canaan, Gen. 11:31: but it is yet said that "he knew it not." He did not understand any thing of the circumstances of it, nor what in that land he was called unto, nor where it was; so that it may be well said that he went whither he knew not. The sum is, that he wholly committed himself unto the power, faithfulness goodness, and conduct of God, without the least encouragement from a prospect of the place whither he was going.

2. All these things being put together, namely, what he was called from; what he was called unto; his readiness in obedience; the ground of his whole undertaking, namely, the call of God, which he received, and obeyed by faith: here is not only an eminent instance of his faith recorded, but an invincible encouragement given unto those Hebrews unto whom the apostle wrote, and unto us with them, that faith is able to carry us through all the difficulties of our profession, unto the full enjoyment of the promise. This I look upon as a second instance of the faith of Abraham, wherein it was signally exemplary. He did not only on the first call of God, through a view of his greatness and sovereign authority, forego all that he had at present, but engaged himself unto absolute obedience, without any prospect what it might cost him, or what he was to undergo on the account of it, or what was the reward proposed unto him. And the same is required of us.

Hebrews 11: 9

Having declared the foundation of the faith of Abraham, and given the first signal instance of it, he proceeds to declare his progress in its exercise, first in general, and then in particular acts and duties; wherein he intermixeth some especial acts of it, whereby he was enabled and encouraged in and unto all other duties of it.

That which he ascribes unto his faith in general is laid down in this verse; whereunto he adjoins that encouraging act of it which enabled him in his duty, verse 10.

Ver. 9.—Πίστει παρώκησεν εἰς τὴν γὴν τῆς ἐπαγγελίας ὡς ἀλλοτρίαν, ἐν σκηναῖς κατοικήσας μετὰ Ἰσαὰκ καὶ Ἰακὼβ τῶν συγκληρονόμων τῆς ἐπαγγελίας τῆς αὐτῆς.

Παρώκησεν. Syr., הַוָא תַּוָתָבָא, "he was a stranger," "a sojourner." Vulg. Lat., "demoratus est," "he tarried." Rhem., "he abode." Erasm., "commigravit;" that is, μετώκησεν, saith Beza, "he went," or "wandered," to answer the preposition εἰς following, "he went into the land." Beza, "commoratus est," "he abode;" and then it must refer unto κατοικήσας, "he dwelt in tents." Others, "advena fuit;" he was "a stranger," "a guest," "a sojourner." Heb., גֵּר הָיָה, "he was a stranger," or גּוּר, "he sojourned."

Ἐν σκηναῖς. Vulg. Lat., "in casulis." Rhem., "in cottages." "In tentoriis," "in tents" or "tabernacles."

Ver. 9.—By faith he sojourned in the land of promise as [in] a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles, with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise.

1. That which is assigned in general unto the faith of Abraham is, that "he sojourned." 2. The place where is added; "in the land of promise." 3. How he esteemed of that land, and how he used it; "as in a strange country." 4. Who were his companions therein; namely, "Isaac and Jacob," on the same account with himself, as "the heirs of promise."

Παρώκησεν. 1. "He sojourned." Παροικέω is "commoror," "to abide;" but it is to abide as a stranger. So it is used Luke 24:18, Σὺ μόνος παροικεῖς ἐν Ἰερουσαλήμ; —"Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem?" a sojourner there for a season, not an inhabitant of the place. And it is nowhere else used. Thence is πάροικος, "a stranger," "a sojourner:" Acts 7:6, "Thy seed shall be πάροικον ἐν γῇ ἀλλοτρία,"—"a stranger;" "should sojourn in a strange land." So πάροικοι are joined with παρεπίδημοι, 1 Pet. 2:11, "Strangers and pilgrims;" and with ξένοι, Eph. 2:19, "foreigners;" and are opposed to πολῖται, "citizens," or the constant inhabitants of any place. Χρόνος παροικίας, is the "time of our pilgrimage" here, 1 Pet. 1:17. Wherefore παρώκησε is, "he abode as a stranger," not as a free denizen of the place; not as an inheritor, for he had no inheritance, not a foot-breadth in that place, Acts 7:5; not as a constant inhabitant or house-dweller, but as a stranger, that moved up and down as he had occasion. His several motions and stages are recorded by Moses.

Εἰς τὴν γῆν. 2. There is the place of his sojourning; "in the land of promise,"—εἰς τὴν γῆν for ἐν τῇ γῇ, "into" for "in the land." So Acts 7:4, "The land εἰς ἣν ὑμεῖς νῦν κατοικεῖτε,"—"wherein ye now dwell;" Heb., בָּאָרֶץ. And from the use of the Hebrew בְּ, εἰς is frequently put for ἐν in the New Testament, and on the contrary. Τῆς ἐπαγγελίας Wherefore not the removal of Abraham into that land, which he had mentioned in the foregoing verse, but his abode as a stranger, a foreigner, a pilgrim in it, is intended. And this was "the land of promise;" that is, which God had newly promised to give unto him, and wherein all the other promises were to be accomplished.

Ὡς ἀλλοτρίαν. 3. He sojourned in this place "as in a strange land." He built no house in it, purchased no inheritance, but only a burying-place. He entered, indeed, into leagues of peace and amity with some, as with Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre, Gen. 14:13; but it was as a stranger, and not as one that had any thing of his own in the land. He reckoned that land at present no more his own than any other land in the world,—no more than Egypt was the land of his posterity when they sojourned there, which God had said was not theirs, nor was so to be, Gen. 15:13.

Ἐν σκηναῖς κατοικήσας. The manner of his sojourning in this land was, that he "dwelt in tabernacles;" "in cottages," saith the Vulgar Latin, absurdly. It was no unusual thing in those days, and in those parts of the world, for many, yea some nations, to dwell in such movable habitations. Why Abraham was satisfied with this kind of life the apostle declares in the next verse. And he is said to dwell in tabernacles, or tents, because his family required more than one of them; though sometimes they are called a tent only, with respect unto that which was the peculiar habitation of the master of the family. And the women had tents unto themselves. So Isaac brought Rebekah into his mother Sarah's tent, Gen. 24:67. So Jacob and his wives had all of them distinct tents, Gen. 31:33. These tents were pitched, fixed, and erected only with stakes and cords, so as that they had no foundation in the earth; whereunto the apostle in the next verse opposeth a habitation that hath a foundation. And with respect unto their flitting condition in these movable houses, God in an especial manner was said to be their dwelling-place, Ps. 90:1.

Μετὰ Ἰσαὰκ καὶ Ἰακώβ. 4. He thus sojourned and dwelt in tents "with Isaac and Jacob." It is evident that Abraham lived until Jacob was sixteen or eighteen years old; and therefore may be said to live with him, as unto the same time wherein they both lived. Nor is there any force in the objection, that Isaac had a

separate tent from Abraham; for it is not said that they lived in the same tents, but that at the same time they all lived in tents. Yet there is no need to confine it unto the same time; the sameness of condition only seems to be intended. For as Abraham was a sojourner in the land of Canaan, without any inheritance or possession, living in tents, so was it also with Isaac and Jacob, and with them alone. Jacob was the last of his posterity who lived as a sojourner in Canaan; all those after him lived in Egypt, and came not into Canaan until they took possession of it for themselves.

Τῶν συγκληρονόμων τῆς ἐπαγγελίας τῆς αὐτῆς. And they were "heirs with him of the same promise;" for not only did they inherit the promise as made unto Abraham, but God distinctly renewed the same promise unto them both;—unto Isaac, Gen. 26:3, 4; and unto Jacob, Gen. 28:13–15. So were they heirs with him of the very same promise. See Ps. 105:9–11.

The sense of the words being declared, we may yet further consider the matter contained in them.

We have here an account of the life of Abraham after his call. And it fell under a twofold consideration: 1. As unto the internal principle of it; so it was a life of faith. 2. As unto the external manner of it; so it was a pilgrimage, without a fixed, settled habitation. Both are proposed in the first words of the text, "By faith he sojourned."

1. As unto the internal principle of it, it was a life of faith.

(1.) The life which he now led was a life of faith with respect unto things spiritual and eternal. For he had for the foundation and object hereof, [1.] The promise of the blessed Seed, and the spiritual blessing of all nations in him, as a confirmation of the first fundamental promise to the church, concerning the Seed of the woman that was to break the serpent's head. And, [2.] God entered expressly into covenant with him, confirming it with the seal of circumcision, wherein he obliged himself to be his God, his God almighty, or all-sufficient, for his temporal and eternal good. To suppose that Abraham saw nothing in this promise and covenant but only things confined unto this life, nothing of spiritual grace or mercy, nothing of eternal reward or glory, is so contrary to the analogy of faith, to express testimony of Scripture, so destructive of all the foundations of religion, so unworthy of the nature and properties of God, rendering his title of "the father of the faithful," and his example in believing, so useless, as that it is a wonder men of any tolerable sobriety should indulge to such an imagination.

(2.) It was a life of faith with respect unto things temporal also. For as he was a sojourner in a strange land, without friends or relations, not incorporated in any political society or dwelling in any city, he was exposed unto all sorts of dangers, oppression and violence, as is usual in such cases. Besides, those amongst whom he sojourned were for the most part wicked and evil men, such as, being fallen into idolatry, were apt to be provoked against him for his profession of faith in the most high God. Hence, on some occurrences of his life that might give them advantage, it is observed, as a matter of danger, that "the Canaanite and the Perizzite dwelled then in the land," Gen. 13:7, 12:6. And this he feared, chap. 20:11. Moreover he had sundry particular trials, wherein he apprehended that his life was in imminent danger, Gen. 12:11–13, 20:2. In all these dangers and trials, with others innumerable, being helpless in himself, he lived in the continual exercise of faith and trust in God, his power, his all-sufficiency, and faithfulness. Hereof his whole story is full of instances, and his faith in them is celebrated frequently in the Scripture.

(3.) In things of both sorts, spiritual and temporal, he lived by faith, in a constant resignation of himself unto the sovereign will and pleasure of God, when he saw no way or means for the accomplishment of the promise. So was it with him with respect unto the long season that he lived without a child, and under the command he had to offer him for a sacrifice, when he had received him.

On all these accounts he was the father, the pattern, or example of believers in all generations. We saw before the foundation of his faith and the entrances of his believing; here we have a progress of them proposed unto our imitation. And that wherein we are instructed hereby is, that when we are once engaged, and have given up ourselves to God in a way of believing, there must be no choice, no dividing or halting, no halving; but we must follow him fully, wholly, and universally, living by faith in all things.

2. For the external part, or manner of his life, it was a pilgrimage, it was a sojourning. Two things are required unto such a state of life: (1.) That a man be in a strange country; (2.) That he have no fixed habitation of his own. If a man be free from either of these, he is not a pilgrim. A man may want a habitation of his own as his inheritance, and yet, being in his own country, not be a pilgrim; and a man may be in a strange country, and yet, having a fixed habitation of his own therein, he may not be a pilgrim: but when both these concur, there is a state of pilgrimage. And so it was with Abraham. He was in a strange land. Though it was "the land of promise," yet having no interest in it,

no relation, no possession, no inheritance, it was unto him a strange land. And he did but sojourn in any place, having no habitation of his own. And this of all others is the most disconsolate, the most desolate estate, and most exposed unto dangers; wherefore he had nothing to trust unto or rest upon but divine protection alone. So are his state and protection described, Ps. 105:12–15. And we may observe,—

Obs. I. That when faith enables men to live unto God as unto their eternal concernments, it will enable them to trust unto him in all the difficulties, dangers, and hazards of this life.—To pretend a trust in God as unto our souls and invisible things, and not resign our temporal concernments with patience and quietness unto his disposal, is a vain pretence. And we may take hence an eminent trial of our faith. Too many deceive themselves with a presumption of faith in the promises of God, as unto things future and eternal. They suppose that they do so believe as that they shall be eternally saved; but if they are brought into any trial as unto things temporal, wherein they are concerned, they know not what belongs unto the life of faith, nor how to trust in God in a due manner. It was not so with Abraham; his faith acted itself uniformly with respect unto the providences as well as the promises of God. Wherefore,—

Obs. II. If we design to have an interest in the blessing of Abraham, we must walk in the steps of the faith of Abraham.—Firm affiance in the promises for grace, mercy, and eternal salvation, trust in his providence for preservation and protection in this world, with a cheerful resignation of all our temporal and eternal concerns unto his disposal, according to the tenor of the covenant, are required hereunto. And they are all indispensably necessary unto that obedience wherein we are to walk with God, as he did. The faith of most men is lame and halt in the principal parts and duties of it.

Obs. III. When faith is once duly fixed on the promises, it will wait patiently under trials, afflictions, and temptations, for their full accomplishment; as did that of Abraham which is here celebrated. See the exposition on chap. 6:12, 15.

Obs. IV. Faith discerning aright the glory of spiritual promises, will make the soul of a believer contented and well satisfied with the smallest portion of earthly enjoyments, etc.

Hebrews 11: 10

The apostle gives a full indication in this discourse that Abraham was very well satisfied with the state and condition of a stranger and pilgrim in the world, without possession, without inheritance, which God had called him unto. And therefore he proceeds in the next place to declare the grounds and reasons whereon he was so satisfied.

Ver. 10.—Ἐξεδέχετο γάρ τὴν τοὺς θεμελίους ἐχουσαν πόλιν, ἧς τεχνίτης καὶ δημιουργὸς ὁ Θεός.

Ver. 10.—For he looked for a city [that city] which hath foundations, whose builder and maker [is] God.

The conjunction γάρ intimates that a reason is given in these words why Abraham behaved himself as a sojourner on the earth; it was because he knew that his portion did not lie in the things here below, but he looked for things of another nature, which by this means were to be obtained. For it is the end that regulates our judgment concerning the means.

And there are in the words, 1. What is assigned unto Abraham, or his faith, namely, an expectation, a looking for somewhat more than at present he enjoyed. 2. What he so looked for, which is "a city;" in opposition unto those tents or movable habitations which he lived in. 3. That city is described, (1.) From the nature of it, it "hath foundations;" (2.) From the builder and framer of it, which is "God."

Our first inquiry must be, what that "city" was; and then how he "looked for it."

1. Some late expositors, not for want of wit or learning, but out of enmity unto the efficacy of the office of Christ under the old testament, and the benefit of the church thereby, have laboured to corrupt this testimony; some by wresting that word, "the city," the object of Abraham's expectation; and others that of his looking for or expecting of it: which must therefore be vindicated.

Τὴν πόλιν. "That city." The article prefixed denotes an eminency in this city. "That is Jerusalem," saith Grotius; and so interprets the words: "He hoped that his posterity should in those places have, not wandering habitations, but a city that God would prepare for them in an especial manner." But he is herein forsaken by his follower. Nor do the Socinians dare to embrace that interpretation, though suited unto their design. But,—

(1.) This is expressly contrary unto the exposition given by the apostle himself of this expression, or rather the repetition of the same thing, verse 16, "They desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be

called their God; for he hath prepared for them a city." The "city" and "country" which they looked for was "heavenly;" and that in opposition unto the land of Canaan, and Jerusalem the metropolis thereof.

(2.) It is not suitable unto God's dealing with Abraham, unto his promise unto him, unto the nature and effects of his faith, that he should have nothing to encourage him in his pilgrimage, but a hope that after many generations his posterity should have a city to dwell in in the land of Canaan, wherein the condition of most of them was not better than his in tents.

(3.) Whereas the framing and making of this city respects the being and substance of it, there is no reason why the building of that Jerusalem should be so ascribed unto God, as to exclude the work and workmanship of men, by whom indeed it was built. For the sense of that expression, "Whose builder and maker is God," is the same with that of chap. 8:2, "Which the Lord pitched, and not man."

(4.) It is plain that this was the ultimate object of the faith of Abraham, the sum and substance of what he looked for from God, on the account of his promise and covenant. To suppose that this was only an earthly city, not to be possessed by his posterity until eight hundred years afterwards, and then but for a limited time, is utterly to overthrow his faith, the nature of the covenant of God with him, and his being an example unto gospel believers, as he is here proposed to be.

This city, therefore, which Abraham looked for, is that heavenly city, that everlasting mansion, which God hath provided and prepared for all true believers with himself after this life, as it is declared, verse 16. It is also sometimes called a house, sometimes a tabernacle, sometimes a mansion, 2 Cor. 5:1, Luke 16:9, John 14:2; it being the place of their everlasting abode, rest, and refreshment. And herein is comprised also the whole reward and glory of heaven, in the enjoyment of God. With the expectation hereof did Abraham and the following patriarchs support, refresh, and satisfy themselves, in the midst of all the toil and labour of their pilgrimage. For,—

Obs. I. A certain expectation of the heavenly reward, grounded on the promises and covenant of God, is sufficient to support and encourage the souls of believers under all their trials in the whole course of their obedience.

Obs. II. Heaven is a settled, quiet habitation; a suitable dwelling for them that have had a life of trouble in this world.

Τοὺς θεμελίους ἐχουσαν. (1.) The first part of the description of this city is taken from the nature of it, namely, that it is such as "hath foundations." It is generally granted that there is an opposition herein unto the tents or tabernacles, such as wherein Abraham sojourned, which had no foundation, being supported only by stakes and cords. But the especial nature of the foundations of this city is intended, in comparison wherewith the foundations of other cities, laid in stone and mortar, are none at all. For experience hath manifested that they all are fading, temporary, and subject to ruin. But these foundations are such as give perpetuity, yea eternity, unto the superstructure, even all that are built upon them. Wherefore these foundations are the eternal power, the infinite wisdom, and immutable counsel of God. On these is the heavenly city founded and established. The purpose of God in his wisdom and power to make the heavenly state of believers immutable and eternal, subject to no change, no alteration, no opposition, is the foundation of this city. For,—

Obs. III. All stability, all perpetuity in every state, here and hereafter, ariseth from the purpose of God, and is resolved thereinto.

Τεχνίτης. (2.) The second part of the description of this city is from "the builder and maker of it;" that is, God. Most expositors judge that both the words here used are of the same signification; and indeed the difference between them is not material, if there be any. Properly, τεχνίτης is "artifex," he who in building projecteth, contriveth, and designeth the whole frame and fabric, that regularly disposeth of it according to the rules of art. Δημιουργός. And δημιουργός is "conditor," the builder or maker; that is, not he whose hands are employed in the work, but he whose the whole work is, at whose charge, on whose design, and for whose service it is made. So are "condo" and "conditor" always applied in Latin authors.

Between these two, namely, "artifex" and "conditor," the contriver and the chief author and disposer of the whole, there is in other buildings an interposition of them that actually labour in the work itself, the workmen. Here is nothing said of them, because they were supplied in this building by a mere word of infinite and sovereign power, without labour or toil; he said, 'Let it be so,' and it was so. Wherefore God alone is the only contriver, framer, and erector of the heavenly city, without the least concurrence of any other agents, without the least use of any instrument.

Next unto the constitution of the person of Christ, and the tabernacle which he pitched therein, this was the greatest instance of his infinite wisdom and skill in architecture.

Heaven, with respect unto the visible fabric of it, with its immense spaces, luminaries, and order, is the principal means of the demonstration of the divine glory unto us, among all the works of creation. But here it is considered as the habitation of God himself, with all that enjoy his presence, and the polity or order which is therein. And this is the most ineffable effect of infinite wisdom and power. And,—

Obs. IV. This is that which recommends unto us the city of God, the heavenly state, that it is, as the work of God alone, so the principal effect of his wisdom and power.

Ἐξεδέχετο. 2. Of this city it is said that Abraham by faith "looked for it;" that is, he believed eternal rest with God in heaven, whereon he comfortably and constantly sustained the trouble of his pilgrimage in this world. This expectation is an act and fruit of faith, or it is that hope proceeding from faith whereby we are saved; or rather, it is a blessed fruit of faith, trust, and hope, whereby the soul is kept continually looking into and after the things that are promised. This was in Abraham a signal evidence of his faith, as also of the power of his faith in his supportment, and the way whereby it did support him; —the same with what the apostle ascribes unto all believers, 2 Cor. 4:16–18, "For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal." This is a full description of the faith of Abraham, in the operation and effect here ascribed to it by the apostle. And herein it is exemplary and encouraging unto all believers under their present trials and sufferings; which is the apostle's present design.

Schlichtingius takes great pains to prove that indeed Abraham did not by faith look for a heavenly city or eternal reward, in direct contradiction unto the express words and argument of the apostle. Some general notions and apprehensions of the future reward he grants he might have, from the goodness and power of God; but faith of an eternal estate he had not, because God had not revealed nor promised it. Why then is it said that he expected it, or looked

for it? "Because God did purpose in himself to do it in his time, it was as certain as if Abraham had believed it; whence he is said to expect it." But to suppose that Abraham, who had the first promise of a Deliverer and deliverance from all the effects of sin, even the promise of Him in whom all nations should be blessed, and was entered into that covenant with God wherein God engaged himself to be his God after this life, as our Saviour expounds it, should have no faith of eternal life, is to deny the faith of God and the church. And we may observe, that—

Obs. V. A constant expectation of an eternal reward argues a vigorous exercise of faith, and a sedulous attendance unto all duties of obedience; for without these it will not be raised nor preserved, 2 Cor. 4:16, 17; 1 John 3:2.

Hebrews 11: 11

The instances of the faith of Abraham insisted on by the apostle in this discourse may be referred unto two heads: first, Such as respect his call; secondly, Such as respect the promise made unto him. Those of the first sort are two: 1. His obedience unto the divine call, in leaving his country and father's family; 2. His patience in enduring the troubles of a pilgrimage all his days, in a land wherein he was a stranger. The consideration of both these we have passed through.

Here he proceeds unto the instances of his faith with respect unto the promise made unto him, namely, that in his seed all the nations of the earth should be blessed. And these also are two: 1. That which concerned the birth of Isaac, by whom the promise was to have its accomplishment; 2. What he did by faith on the command of God, in offering up of the son of the promise.

In the first of these, or what concerned the birth of Isaac, the son of the promise, Abraham was not alone, but Sarah his wife was both naturally and spiritually no less concerned than himself. Wherefore the apostle in the midst of his discourse concerning Abraham and his faith, in this one instance introduceth Sarah in conjunction with him, as on many reasons she ought not to have been omitted.

Ver. 11.—Πίστει καὶ αὐτὴ Σάῤῥα (στεῖρα οὖσα) δύναμιν εἰς καταβολὴν σπέρματος ἔλαβε, καὶ παρὰ καιρὸν ἡλικίας ἔτεκεν, ἐπεὶ πιστὸν ἡγήσατο τὸν ἐπαγγειλάμενον.

Στεῖρα οὖσα, "being barren." Vulg. Lat., "sterilis." Syr., דְּעָקְרָתָא הֲוַת, "who was barren." And the words are retained in many vulgar translations. We omit them, for they are found only in two copies of the original; nor are they taken

notice of by the ancient scholiasts. And it is far more probable that these words were inserted in one or two copies, than that they were left out of all the rest: for there is no colour of reason why they should be omitted; but the addition of them, especially containing a truth, seems to set out more fully the great ness of the instance proposed.

Εἰς καταβολὴν σπέρματος. Vulg. Lat., "in conceptione seminis." Rhem., "received virtue in conceiving seed." Δύναμις is properly "vis," "strength," "power." The Vulgar renders it here "virtutem;" proper enough in Latin, but "virtue" is very improper in our language, as unto this use of the word. "In the conception," for "to conceive." "Ad concipiendum semen," "ad retinendum semen," "ad concipiendum et retinendum semen." Syr., דִּתְקַבְּלִי צַרְעָא, "ut susciperet semen." The inquiries and disputes of expositors on these words, as unto their precise signification with reference unto Sarah, are useless, and some of them offensive. Strength to conceive a child, after the manner of other women, is all that the apostle intends.

Ἔτεκεν is absent in one ancient Greek copy; which supplies it by τὸ τεκνῶσαι, after ἔλαβε, to "beget children." It is omitted in the Vulgar, which reads the words "etiam praeter tempus aetatis;" "yea, past the time of age." The Syriac retains it, יָלְדַת, "brought," or "bare a child." Those who omit it, refer the whole to the cause, or her conception; those who retain it, express the effect also, in child-bearing.

Ἡγήσατο. Vulg., "credidit," she "believed." So the Syriac, דְּאִשְׁתַּרַת, "believed assuredly." "Reputavit," "judicavit;" "accounted," "judged."

Ver. 11.—Through faith also Sarah herself received strength to conceive seed; and was delivered of a child when she was past age; because she judged him faithful who had promised.

1. The person whose faith is here proposed as exemplary, is Sarah. But many expositors suppose that it is not Sarah's faith, but Abraham's, which wrought this effect by Sarah, that is commended. The reasons which I have seen on the one side and the other are light, and easily answered. But there are those which are cogent to convince that it is the faith of Sarah that is intended For,—

Καὶ αὐτὴ Σάῤῥα. (1.) The manner of expression is a certain determination of her person to be the subject spoken of: Καὶ αὐτὴ Σάῤῥα,—"and," or "also, Sarah herself." The words plainly signify the introduction of another person in the same order, or unto the same purpose with him before spoken of. (2.) As Abraham was the father of the faithful, or the church, so she was the mother of

it, so as that the distinct mention of her faith was necessary. She was the free-woman from whence the church sprang, Gal. 4:22, 23. And all believing women are her daughters, 1 Pet. 3:6. See Gen. 17:16. (3.) Her working and obedience are proposed unto the church as an example, and therefore her faith may justly be so also, 1 Pet. 3:5, 6. (4.) She was equally concerned in the divine revelation with Abraham, and was as sensible of great difficulties in its accomplishment as Abraham, if not more so. (5.) The blessing of the promised Seed was confined and appropriated unto Sarah no less than unto Abraham: Gen. 17:16, "I will bless her, ... yea, I will bless her, and she shall be a mother of nations." See Gen. 17:19, 18:10. Herein her faith was necessary, and is here recorded.

Some things may be observed in the proposition of this instance and example; as,—

(1.) That it is the faith of a woman that is celebrated. Hence that sex may learn, even that they also may be examples of faith unto the whole church, as Sarah was. And it is necessary for their encouragement; because, [1.] Of the especial concernment of their sex in the first entrance of sin, which the apostle animadverts upon, for their instruction in humility and subjection unto the will of God, and makes it a matter of especial grace, that "they shall be saved," 1 Tim. 2:9–15. [2.] Because of their natural weakness, subject in a peculiar manner unto various temptations; which in this example they are encouraged to conflict withal and overcome by faith. Whence it is that they are "heirs together" with their believing husbands "of the grace of life," 1 Pet. 3:7.

(2.) Here is a signal commendation of the faith of Sarah, even in that very instance wherein it was shaken and failed, though it recovered itself afterward. For whatever working there might be of natural affections in the surprisal which befell her on the promise of a son, whereon she laughed, yet there was a mixture of unbelief in it, as appears from the reproof given her, "Is any thing too hard for the LORD?" Gen. 18:13, 14. But being awakened by that reproof, and receiving a fuller evidence that it was the Lord which spake to her, she recovered herself, and rested by faith in his power and truth. Wherefore,—

Obs. I. Faith may be sorely shaken and tossed with difficulties, at their first appearance, lying in the way of the promise, which yet at last it shall overcome. —And there be many degrees of its weakness and failure herein; as, [1.] A mere recoiling with some disorder in the understanding, unable to apprehend the way and manner of the accomplishment of the promise. This was in the blessed Virgin herself, who, on the promise of her conception of a child, replied, "How

shall," or "can this be, seeing I know not a man?" Luke 1:34. But she immediately recovered herself into an acquiescency in the power and faithfulness of God, verses 37, 38, 45. [2.] It ariseth unto a distrust of the event of the promises or their accomplishment, because of the difficulties that lie in the way. So was it with Zacharias, the father of John Baptist; who thereon had his own dumbness given him for a sign of the truth of the promise, Luke 1:18, 20. So was it with Sarah on this occasion; for which she was reproved. This is denied of Abraham, "He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief," Rom. 4:20. And this at times is found in us all. [3.] When there is for a season an actual prevalency of unbelief. So it was with the apostle Peter, when he denied his Master; who yet was quickly recovered. It is therefore our duty, [1.] To watch that our faith be not surprised, or shaken by the appearance of difficulties and oppositions. [2.] Not to despond utterly on any degree of its failure; for it is in its nature, by the use of means, to recover its vigour and efficacy.

(3.) The carriage of Sarah is twice repeated by the Holy Ghost, here and 1 Pet. 3:6; and in both places only what was good in it,—namely, her faith toward God on her recovery after her reproof, and her observance of her husband, whom, speaking to herself, she called "lord,"—is mentioned and proposed, without the least remembrance of her failing or miscarriage. And such will be the judgment of Christ at the last day concerning all those whose faith and obedience are sincere, though accompanied with many failings.

2. The second thing in the words is, what is here ascribed unto the faith of Sarah, or what she obtained by virtue of it: "She received strength to conceive seed."

Ἔλαβε. (1.) She "received" it. It was not what she had in or of herself; she had it in a way of free gift, whereunto she contributed nothing but a passive reception.

Δύναμιν. (2.) That which she received was "strength;" that is, power and ability for the especial end aimed at: this she had lost through age. And I do believe that this was not a mere miraculous generation, but that she received a general restoration of her nature unto an ability for all its primitive operations, which was before decayed. So was it with Abraham afterward, who after this, after his body was as dead, received strength to have many children by Keturah.

Εἰς καταβολὴν σπέρματος. (3.) What she received this strength for by faith; "to conceive seed." There is no need to debate the precise signification of the word καταβολή in this place, as elsewhere. The arguings of some about it are offensive.

It may suffice, that the meaning of the phrase is, to conceive a child in the womb after a natural way and manner, such as there was not in the conception of our Lord Jesus Christ in the womb of the blessed Virgin. Wherefore it is most probable that the holy Virgin conceived in her womb immediately upon the angelical salutation declaring it unto her. But Sarah conceived not until some good while after the divine revelation made unto her that she should have a child. See Gen. 17:21, 21:2.

Here some copies read στεῖρα οὖσα, "being barren;" which was true, and increaseth the miracle of her conception;—that whereas she had been barren all the usual and ordinary time of women's bearing children in the course of their lives, she should now in her old age conceive seed. It is observed, indeed, that "Sarai was barren," Gen. 11:30. But yet when the trial of her faith came, the difficulty did not arise from a natural barrenness, but that the time of life for bearing of children was now past with her. She was old, "and it ceased to be with her after the manner of women," Gen. 18:11, 12; or, as the apostle expounds it, her womb was dead, Rom. 4:19. And this is that which here the greatness of this effect of faith is ascribed unto, namely, that she was "delivered of a child when she was past age."

Ἔτεκεν. If we read ἔτεκε, with most copies, "she was delivered of a child," or she "childed," she "bare a child," then the particle καί is conjunctive, and denotes an addition unto what was said of her conceiving seed, namely, that she "also childed," or brought forth a child. If it be absent, it is to be rendered by "even," to denote a heightening circumstance of what was before effected. "She received strength to conceive seed, even when she was past age." But the former is to be followed; she conceived, and accordingly bare a son, Gen. 21:2.

Παρὰ καιρὸν ἡλικίας. That which was eminent herein, manifesting that it was a mere effect of faith, is, that it was thus with her παρὰ καιρὸν ἡλικίας, "after the season of age was past." So the apostle expounds that passage in Moses, "Sarah was old, and well stricken in age; and it ceased to be with Sarah after the manner of women," Gen. 18:11. She was ninety years old at that time, chap. 17:17. And this was that which at first shook her faith, for want of a due consideration of the omnipotency of God; for that the improbability hereof, and the impossibility of it in an ordinary way of nature, was that which shook her faith for a season, as evident from the reply made by God unto her, "Is any thing too hard for the LORD?" Gen. 18:14. She considered not that where divine veracity was engaged, infinite power would be so also to make it good. And we may observe, that,—

Obs. II. Although God ordinarily worketh by his concurring blessing on the course of nature, yet is he not obliged thereunto. Yet,—

Obs. III. It is no defect in faith, not to expect events and blessings absolutely above the use of means, unless we have a particular warranty for it, as Sarah had in this case.

Obs. IV. The duty and use of faith about temporal mercies are to be regulated by the general rules of the word, where no especial providence doth make application of a promise.

Obs. V. The mercy here spoken of, concerning a son unto Abraham by Sarah his wife, was absolutely decreed, and absolutely promised; yet God indispensably requires faith in them for the fulfilling of that decree, and the accomplishment of that promise.

The great engine whereby men have endeavoured to destroy the certainty and efficacy of the grace of God is this, that if he have absolutely decreed and promised any thing which he will accomplish, then all our duty with respect unto it is rendered unnecessary. And if this be so, all the faith of the church under the old testament concerning the promised Seed, or coming of the Messiah, was vain and useless, for it was absolutely decreed and absolutely promised. So would have been the faith of Sarah in this case; nor could she have deserved blame for her unbelief. But it is no way inglorious unto the methods of God, as unto his own grace and our obedience, that they are unsuited unto the carnal reasonings of men.

3. The last thing in the words is the ground of the effect declared, or the nature of that faith whereby she obtained the mercy mentioned. And this was, "Because she judged him faithful who had promised."

Ἐπεί, "quoniam," "because." Ἐπεί. It doth not intimate the meritorious cause of the thing itself, nor any procuring cause of it; it only shows the reason of what was before asserted, namely, that it was by faith that she obtained a child, —"For she judged," etc.

That which is ascribed unto her on this occasion, which contains the general nature of that faith whereby she received strength, is, that "she judged him faithful who had promised," etc.

Ἡγήσατο. (1.) The act ascribed unto her is, that "she judged," she reckoned, esteemed, reputed him so to be. Vulg. Lat. and Syr., "she believed:" which is true; but there is more in this word than a naked assent, there is a determinate resolution of the mind and judgment, on a due consideration of the evidence

given for its assent unto any truth. And herein the nature of true faith in general doth consist, namely, in the mind's judging and determination upon the evidence proposed. Sarah's faith in this case was the issue of a temptation, a trial. When she first heard the promise, she considered only the thing promised, and was shaken in her faith by the improbability of it, being that which she had lost all expectation and even desire of. But when she recollected herself, and took off her mind from the thing promised unto the Promiser, faith prevailed in her.

Τὸν ἐπαγγειλάμενον. (2.) This is manifest in the especial object of her faith herein; and that was, "He that promised,"—that is, God himself in his promise. She first thought of the thing promised, and this seemed unto her altogether incredible; but at length, taking off her thoughts from the consideration of all second causes, she fixed her mind on God himself who had promised, and came unto this resolution, whatever difficulties or oppositions lay in the way of the accomplishment of the promise, he that made it was able to remove them all; and such was his faithfulness, that he would make good his word wherein he had caused her to put her trust.

Πιστόν. (3.) So it is added in the last place, that "she judged him faithful." She resolved her faith into, and rested upon the veracity of God in the accomplishment of his promises; which is the immediate proper object of faith, Tit. 1:2. But yet also she joined with it the consideration of almighty power; for she thus recollected herself upon those words of God, "Is any thing too hard for the LORD?" And we may see,—

Obs. VI. That the formal object of faith in the divine promises is not the things promised in the first place, but God himself in his essential excellencies of truth or faithfulness, and power.—To fix our minds on the things themselves promised, to have an expectation or supposition of the enjoyment of them, as suppose mercy, grace, pardon, glory, without a previous acquiescency of mind in the truth and faithfulness of God, or on God himself as faithful, and able to accomplish them, is but a deceiving imagination. But on this exercise of faith in God, we make a comfortable application of the things promised unto our own souls; as did Sarah in this case. And,—

Obs. VII. Every promise of God hath this consideration tacitly annexed to it, "Is any thing too hard for the LORD?"—There is no divine promise, no promise of the new covenant, but when it comes unto the trial, as unto our closing with it, we apprehend as great a difficulty and improbability of its accomplishment

unto us as Sarah did of this. All things seem easy unto them who know not what it is to believe, nor the necessity of believing; they do so to them also who have learned to abuse the grace of God expressed in the promises, and to turn it into wantonness: but poor, humble, broken souls, burdened with sin, and entangled in their own darkness, find insuperable difficulties, as they apprehend, in the way of the accomplishment of the promises. This is their principal retreat in their distress, "Is any thing too hard for the LORD?" This God himself proposeth as the foundation of our faith in our entering into covenant with him, Gen. 17:1, 2. And therefore,—

Obs. VIII. Although the truth, veracity, or faithfulness of God, be in a peculiar manner the immediate object of our faith, yet it takes in the consideration of all other divine excellencies for its encouragement and corroboration. And all of them together are that "name of the LORD," whereon a believing soul stays itself in all extremities, Isa. 50:10. And,—

Thus is "the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith;" that is, the righteousness of Christ as tendered in the promise is made known and communicated from the faith of God therein unto the faith of them by whom it is believed.

Hebrews 11: 12

In this verse we have an illustration of the fruit of the faith before declared, by the eminent consequent of it, in the numerous or innumerable posterity of Abraham.

Ver. 12.—Διὸ καὶ ἀφ᾽ ἑνὸς ἐγεννήθησαν, καὶ ταῦτα νενεκρωμένου, καθὼς τὰ ἄστρα τοῦ οὐρανοῦ τῷ πλήθει, καὶ ὡς ἡ ἄμμος ἡ παρὰ τὸ χεῖλος τῆς θαλάσσης ἡ ἀναρίθμητος.

Ver. 12.—Therefore sprang there even of one, and him as good as dead, [so many] as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the sea-shore, innumerable.

The things contained in this verse, as they were a consequent of the original mercy or fruit of faith in the conception and birth of Isaac, so they are reckoned also themselves unto the gratuitous remuneration of faith, although it be not added particularly that it was by faith. For they are expressly contained in the promise to Abraham, which he received by faith, and that in the very words recorded here by the apostle: Gen. 15:4, 5, the Lord said unto him, "He that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir;" which is what was

declared in the foregoing verse. And then he adds, "Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them, ... So shall thy seed be;" as it is in this place: and chap. 22:17, "I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea-shore."

Wherefore the belief hereof belonged unto that faith of Abraham which he is commended for. And it had its peculiar difficulties also, that rendered it both acceptable and commendable. For whereas he himself had but one son by virtue of the promise, it was not easy for him to apprehend how he should have such an innumerable posterity.

And it may be observed, that the first testimony given unto the justification of Abraham by faith, was upon his belief of this part of the promise, that his seed should be as the stars of heaven, that cannot be numbered; for thereon it is immediately added, that "he believed in the LORD, and he counted it to him for righteousness," Gen. 15:5, 6. For although this promise concerned things temporal, yet it belonged unto the way of redemption by Christ, the promised seed: so that justifying faith may act itself, and be an evidence of our justification, when we believe promises even about temporal mercies, as they belong unto the covenant; whereof we have innumerable examples under the old testament.

Διό. The note of inference, διό, "therefore," respects not a consequence in the way of reasoning, but the introduction of a consequent, or other matter, upon what was before asserted.

Καί. And the particle καί in the original is not conjunctive, but emphatical only; so we render it even, "even of one."

Τῶ πλήθει. The blessing here declared as a fruit of faith, is, a numerous posterity. Not only had Abraham and Sarah one son, upon their believing, but by him a numerous, yea, an innumerable, posterity.

But it may be inquired, whence this should be such a blessing as to be celebrated amongst the most eminent fruits of faith, as being the subject of a solemn divine promise. I answer, It was so, because the whole church of God, who should be the true worshippers of him under the old testament, was confined unto the posterity of Abraham. Therefore was their multiplication a singular blessing, which all the faithful prayed for and rejoiced in. So is it stated by Moses, Deut. 1:10, 11: "The LORD your God hath multiplied you, and, behold,

ye are this day as the stars of heaven for multitude. The LORD God of your fathers make you a thousand times so many more as ye are, and bless you, as he hath promised you!" And,—

Obs. I. When God is pleased to increase his church in number, it is on various accounts a matter of rejoicing unto all believers; and a subject of their daily prayers, as that which is frequently promised in the word of truth.

Obs. II. An ungodly, carnal multitude, combined together in secular interests for their advantage, unto the ends of superstition and sin, calling themselves "the church," like that of Rome, is set up by the craft of Satan, to evade the truth and debase the glory of these promises.

This blessing of a numerous posterity is variously set forth, illustrated, and heightened.

1. From the root of it. It was "one," one man; that is Abraham. Unto him alone was the great promise of the blessing Seed now confined. And he, though but one, was heir of all the promises. And this privilege of Abraham, the Jews, when they were grown wicked and carnal, boasted of and applied unto themselves. They spake, saying, "Abraham was one, and he inhabited the land: but we are many; the land is given us for an inheritance," Ezek. 33:24. He was that one whose rights and privileges they appropriated unto themselves. He was mentioned so here by the apostle, to set off the greatness of the mercy proposed, that so many should spring of one.

Καὶ ταῦτα νενεκρωμένου. 2. From the consideration of the state and outward condition of that one when he became the spring of this numerous posterity; "and him as good as dead,"—καὶ ταῦτα νενεκρωμένου: so all our translations from Tyndal, much to the sense of the words. So it is expressed, Rom. 4:19, Σῶμα ἤδη νενεκρωμένον,—"His body now dead;" or rather, "mortified," brought towards death, made impotent by age; being, as the apostle there observes, "about an hundred years old." The word ταῦτα is variously rendered; but, as Erasmus observes, it is often used adverbially, and rendered "idque," "atque," "id," "et quidem;" "and that," "and truly." And if we shall say that καὶ ταῦτα is taken for καὶ πρὸς ταῦτα, as sometimes it is, the meaning will be plain: "And as unto these things,"—that is, the generation of children,—"one that was dead." Otherwise I cannot better express the sense than as it is in our translation. For this sense cannot be allowed, that "there sprang from one, and that after he was

dead;" with respect unto the succeeding progenitors of the people: but respect is had unto the then present state of Abraham. His body naturally was as useless unto the end of the procreation of such a posterity as if it had been dead.

Obs. III. God oftentimes by nature works things above the power of nature in its ordinary efficacy and operations. So by weak and dead means he often produceth mighty effects.

Ἐγεννήθησταν. The way of the raising of this posterity from this "one," we express by, "They sprang from him;" that is, as the word signifies, were "begotten" or born in their several generations,—the original spring and fountain of them all being in him.

3. The greatness of this fruit of faith, in a numerous posterity, is expressed by declaring the multitude of them, in a twofold proverbial expression.

Τῶ πλήθει. (1.) They were for multitude, "as many as the stars in the sky." I had rather say, "the stars of heaven," as it is in the original, for so they are constantly called; and in all naturalists the place of their fixation is termed "the starry heaven."

Τὰ ἄστρα τοῦ οὐρανοῦ. This expression was first used by God himself, who commanded Abraham to go out, or "brought him forth abroad," and bade him "look toward heaven and tell the stars, if he were able to number them." Now, although it is pretended that, by rules of art, those of them which are visible or conspicuous may be numbered, and are not so great a multitude as is supposed, yet it is evident that in a naked view of them, by our eyes, without any outward helps, such as God called Abraham unto, there can be no greater appearance of what is absolutely innumerable.

Besides, I judge that in this comparison of the posterity of Abraham unto the stars of heaven, not only their number, but their beauty and order are also respected. The stars of heaven are like the inhabitants of a well-governed commonwealth, a people digested into order and rule, with great variety as unto their magnitude and aspects. This was a just representation of the numerous posterity of Abraham, disposed into the order of a wise commonwealth in the giving of the law.

(2.) In the other allusion they are declared to be absolutely innumerable. It is not said that they should be as many as the sand by the sea-shore; but as that is "innumerable," so should they also be. So were they a multitude, in their successive generations, which could be no more numbered than the sand by the sea-shore.

On many considerations there cannot be a greater instance of the absolute certainty of an almighty efficacy in divine promises for their accomplishment, than is in that here proposed. Neither their own sins, nor the oppressions of the world, nor their Egyptian bondage, nor the graves of the wilderness, could hinder this fruit of faith, or the accomplishment of this promise. And hence proceeded the miraculous multiplication of the posterity of Jacob in Egypt, wherein from seventy-five persons, in little more than two hundred years, there sprang "six hundred thousand men, besides women and children." Wherefore, —

Obs. IV. Whatever difficulties and oppositions lie in the way of the accomplishment of the promises under the new testament, made unto Jesus Christ concerning the increase and stability of his church and kingdom, they shall have an assured accomplishment.

Hebrews 11: 13

Upon the proposal of these instances, because there was somewhat peculiar in them, distinct from those before recounted and those which follow after, namely, their pilgrim estate after the call of Abraham, the apostle diverts unto the declaration of what they did, what they attained, and what they professed in that state. His entrance into it is in this verse.

Ver. 13.—Κατὰ πίστιν ἀπέθανον οὗτοι πάντες, μὴ λαβόντες τὰς ἐπαγγελίας, ἀλλὰ πόῤῥωθεν αὐτὰς ἰδόντες, καὶ πεισθέντες, καὶ ἀσπασάμενοι, καὶ ὁμολογήσαντες ὅτι ξένοι καὶ παρεπίδημοί εἰσιν ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς.

Κατὰ πίστιν. Vulg. Lat., "juxta fidem," "according to faith." Syr., בְּהֵימְנוּתָא, "in faith;" as in the former places, where it is ἐν πίστει. Beza, "secundum fidem;" more properly than "juxta."

Μὴ λαβόντες τὰς ἐπαγγελίας. Vulg. Lat., "non acceptis repromissionibus," "having not received the promises." Beza, "non adepti promissa," "having not obtained the promises;" I think less to the mind of the apostle. Syr., מוּלְכָנְהוּן, "their promise," the promise made to them. Ethiop., "all these believing, obtained their own promises;" as it is usual with that translator, to contradict the text.

Πόῤῥωθεν, "è longe," "è longinquo," "eminus;" "afar off," at a great distance.

Πεισθέντες is not in the Vulgar Latin nor Syriac, but is in most Greek copies, and is necessary to the sense.

Ἀσπασάμενοι. Vulg. Lat., "salutantes." Beza, "amplexi essent;" as we, "embraced." Syr., וְהָדְיוּ בֵּהּ, "and rejoiced in it."

Ver. 13.—These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of [them], and embraced [them], and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.

There is proposed unto us in the words, 1. The persons spoken of; and, 2. What is affirmed of them.

Οὗτοι πάντες. 1. The persons spoken of,—"All these." That is, not all that he had instanced in from the beginning of the chapter, although they also, all of them except Enoch, who was translated, died in faith; but those only who left their own country on the especial command of God, living as pilgrims in the land of Canaan, and elsewhere,—that is, Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, and Jacob. This is evident from what is affirmed of them in the ensuing verses, 13–15.

2. Of all these, many things are affirmed.

Ἀπέθανον κατὰ πίστιν. (1.) That they "died in faith." That they lived by faith, he had before declared; and now he adds that so they died also. It is in the original, "according to faith;" in the same sense. So, to "walk κατὰ σάρκα," Rom. 8:4, is the same with living ἐν σαρκί, verse 8. And so it is well rendered, "in faith."

There is no doubt but that the apostle commends the faith of them spoken of, from its perseverance unto the end; as there is no faith genuine or accepted with God but what doth and will do so. Their faith failed them not, neither unto nor in their last moments. But there is also somewhat more intended, namely, the exercise of faith in dying: they died in the exercise of faith as unto their own persons and state. And hereunto is required, [1.] The firm belief of a substantial existence after this life; without this all faith and hope must perish in death. [2.] A resignation and trust of their departing souls into the care and power of God, when they understood not how they could continue in their own conduct. [3.] The belief of a future state of blessedness and rest, here called "an heavenly country," "a city" prepared for them by God. [4.] Faith of the resurrection of their bodies after death, that their entire persons, which had undergone the pilgrimage of this life, might be stated in eternal rest. For, on this their dying in faith, God after death "was not ashamed to be called their God," Heb. 11:16. Whence our Saviour proves the resurrection of the body, Matt. 22:31, 32. And,—

Obs. I. It is the glory of true faith, that it will not leave them in whom it is, that it will not cease its actings for their supportment and comfort in their dying; when the hope of the hypocrite doth perish. And,—

Obs. II. The life of faith doth eminently manifest itself in death, when all other reliefs and supportments do fail. And,—

Obs. III. That is the crowning act of faith, the great trial of its vigour and wisdom, namely, in what it doth in our dying. And,—

Obs. IV. Hence it is that many of the saints, both of old and of late, have evidenced the most triumphant actings of faith in the approach of death.

Μὴ λαβόντες τὰς ἐπαγγελίας. (2.) The second thing affirmed of them is, that they "received not the promises."

It is granted that the "promises" are here taken for the things promised; ἐπαγγελίας for ἐπάγγελτα. For as unto the promises themselves, they "saw them," they "were persuaded of them," they "embraced them;" wherefore it cannot be said that they received them not. And of Abraham it is said expressly, that he did receive the promises, verse 17; as also, that all other believers under the old testament did obtain them, verse 33.

Again, "the promises," in the plural number, is the same with "the promise," in the singular, verse 39: for the promise intended was but one, but whereas it is frequently renewed, it is called "the promises;" as also because of the manifold occasional additions that were made unto it, and declaratory of it.

This "promise," or the thing promised, some expositors (as Grotius and his follower) take to be the land of Canaan, which these patriarchs possessed not. But nothing can be more remote from the intention of the apostle; for whilst they received not these promises, the country which they looked after was heavenly. And in the close of this discourse, he affirmeth of them who lived in Canaan in its greatest glory, and possessed it in quietness, as Samuel and David, that they received not the promise, verse 39. Wherefore this promise is no other but that of the actual exhibition of Christ in the flesh, with all the privileges of the church thereby, which the apostle had so fully insisted on, chapters 7–10, foregoing. So, in particular, Abraham's seeing the promises afar off, and embracing them, is interpreted by his seeing the day of Christ and rejoicing, John 8:56. This was the great fundamental promise of the blessing Seed made unto Abraham, which virtually comprised in it all other promises and blessings,

temporal and eternal. This was that "better thing which God provided for us" under the new testament, "that they without us should not be made perfect," Heb. 11:40. And,—

Obs. V. The due understanding of the whole old testament, with the nature of the faith and obedience of all the saints under it, depends on this one truth, that they believed things that were not yet actually exhibited nor enjoyed.—This is the line of life and truth that runs through all their profession and duties, the whole exercise of their faith and love, without which it was but a dead carcass. It was Christ in the promise, even before his coming, that was the life of the church in all ages. And,—

Obs. VI. God would have the church from the beginning of the world to live on promises not actually accomplished.—For although we do enjoy the accomplishment of the great promise of the incarnation of the Son of God, yet the church continues still to live on promises, which in this world cannot be perfectly fulfilled. And,—

Obs. VII. We may receive the promises as to the comfort and benefit of them, when we do not actually receive the things promised. See verse 1. And,—

Obs. VIII. As our privileges in the enjoyment of the promises are above theirs under the old testament; so our faith, thankfulness, and obedience, ought to excel theirs also.

(3.) The third thing in the words, is the exercise and actings of their faith towards those promises which they had not yet received; that is, in their full accomplishment. And this is expressed under two heads: [1.] What did immediately respect the promises themselves. [2.] What profession they made thereon as unto all other things.

[1.] There were three degrees of the actings of their faith, with respect unto the promises themselves: 1st. They "saw them afar off;" 2dly. They were "persuaded of them;" 3dly. They "embraced them:" wherein the whole work of faith with reference unto divine promises is comprised and regularly disposed. For sight or knowledge, with trust or assured persuasion, and adherence with love, comprise the whole work of faith.

Πόῤῥωθεν αὐτὰς ἰδόντες. 1st. They "saw them afar off," at a great distance. This further makes it evident that it is the things promised, and not the promises themselves, that are intended; for the promises were present with them, given unto them, and not afar off. The word respects time, and not distance of place; "è longinquo." It was then a long space of time before those promises were to be

accomplished. And this space was gradually taken off and shortened, until it was said to be a very "little while," Hag. 2:6, 7; and he that was promised was to come "suddenly," Mal. 3:1. But at present it was "afar off." This kept the church in a longing expectation and desire of the coming of this day; wherein the principal work of its faith and love did consist.

Obs. IX. No distance of time or place can weaken faith as unto the accomplishment of divine promises.—There are such still left unto us upon record, that are, it may be, afar off; such as those which concern the destruction of Antichrist, and the glory of the kingdom of Christ in the latter days. The rule of faith concerning them is given us, Hab. 2:3, 4. Yea,—

Obs. X. Quiet waiting for the accomplishment of promises at a great distance, and which most probably will not be in our days, is an eminent fruit of faith.—"He that believeth will not make haste."

Ἰδόντες. Thus they saw them: It is an act of the mind and understanding that is expressed by this verb of sense. They understood the mind of God in the promises, that is, in general; and had the idea of the things promised in their minds. It is true, they discerned not distinctly and particularly the whole of what was contained in them; but they considered them, and diligently inquired into the mind of God in them, 1 Pet. 1:11, 12. They looked on the promises, they saw them as a map, wherein was drawn up the whole scheme of divine wisdom, goodness, and grace, for their deliverance from the state of sin and misery; but at such a distance as that they could not clearly discern the things themselves, but only saw a shadow of them.

And this is the first act of faith with respect unto divine promises, namely, the discerning or understanding of the goodness, wisdom, love, and grace of God in them, suited unto our deliverance and salvation. And this I take to be intended in this expression, "they saw them;" which expositors take no notice of.

Πεισθέντες. 2dly. They were "persuaded of them,"—fully or certainly persuaded of them, as the word is used frequently. This is the second act of faith with respect unto divine promises. And it is the mind's satisfactory acquiescency in the truth of God as unto their accomplishment. For when we discern the excellency of the things contained in them, the next inquiry is after an assurance of our participation of them. And herein, on the part of God, his truth and veracity do represent themselves unto us, Tit. 1:2. Hence ariseth a firm persuasion of mind concerning their accomplishment. And to confirm this

persuasion, God, in infinite condescension, confirmed his promise and his truth therein unto Abraham with his oath, as the apostle at large declares, Heb. 6:12–18. Hereon they were assuredly persuaded that they were not empty flourishes, mere promises, that they were not subject unto any disappointment; but notwithstanding their great distance, and the intervenience of all sorts of difficulties, they should certainly be accomplished in their appointed time and season, Isa. 60:22.

Obs. XI. This firm persuasion of the truth of God in the accomplishment of his promises unto us, upon a discovery of their worth and excellency, is the second act of faith, wherein the life of it doth principally consist.

Ἀσπασάμενοι. 3dly. On this persuasion they "embraced them." The word signifies "to salute," and is applied unto such salutations as are accompanied with delight and veneration. And because this kind of salutation is usually expressed by stretching out the hands to receive and embrace that which is saluted, it is used also for "to embrace;" which is the most proper sense of it in this place. Wherefore, this embracing of the promises is the heart's cleaving to them with love, delight, and complacency; which if it be not a proper act of faith, yet is an inseparable fruit thereof.

The apostle, therefore, hath here given us a blessed representation of the faith of these primitive believers; and therein of the frame of their hearts and minds in their walking before God. God had given unto them, confirmed and repeated, the great promise of the blessing Seed, as a recoverer from the state of sin, misery, and death. This they knew, as unto the actual accomplishment of it, was yet at a great distance from them; howbeit they saw that of the divine wisdom, goodness, and grace in it, as was every way suited unto their satisfaction and reward. Hereon they thrust forth the arms of their love and affection to welcome, entertain, and embrace him who was promised. And of this embracement of the promises, or of the Lord Christ in the promise, the Book of Canticles is a blessed exposition.

This was the life, this was the comfort and supportment of their souls, in all their wanderings, under all their sufferings, in all the hazards and trials of their pilgrimage. And seeing it succeeded so well with them, as the apostle in the next verses declares, it is an eminent encouragement unto us to abide in the profession of the faith of the gospel, notwithstanding all difficulties, oppositions, and persecutions that we meet withal; we having already received that great privilege whereof they were only in the expectation.

And we may observe by the way, the impiety of many in our days, who even deride such a faith as hath the divine promises for its especial object, which it embraceth, mixeth itself withal, and produceth an affiance in God for their accomplishment unto themselves in whom it is. For this was that faith whereby "the elders obtained a good report," and not a mere naked, barren assent unto divine revelation; which is all that they will allow unto it.

Ομολογήσαντες. [2.] The second effect of their faith was, that they "confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth." To "confess," is to grant that which we cannot deny, whether we do it willingly or unwillingly. But that is not the sense of the word as here used; it hath another signification. Ομολογία is the "profession" that we make of our faith and hope, 2 Cor. 9:13; 1 Tim. 6:12; Heb. 3:1, 4:14, 10:23. And it is applied unto the witness which the Lord Christ gave unto himself and his doctrine, 1 Tim. 6:13. So is the verb, ὁμολογέω, constantly used, "to avow publicly," "to profess openly" what is our faith and hope, especially when we meet with danger on the account of it. See Matt. 10:32; Luke 12:8; Rom. 10:9, 10. That, therefore, which is ascribed unto these believers is, that on all occasions they avowedly professed that their interest was not in nor of this world; but they had such a satisfactory portion in the promises which they embraced, as that they publicly renounced a concernment in the world like that of other men, whose portion is in this life. And,—

Obs. XII. This avowed renunciation of all other things besides Christ in the promise, and the good-will of God in him, as to the repose of any trust or confidence in them for our rest and satisfaction, is an eminent act of that faith whereby we walk with God, Jer. 3:23, 24; Hos. 14:2, 3.

Ξένοι καὶ παρεπίδημοι. That, in particular, which they thus professed of themselves is, that "they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth." Rest, or home, is the perfection of our natures or beings; and it was originally intrusted with powers of operation for the attaining of it. But by sin those powers are lost, and the end is no more by them attainable. Yet we cannot but continue still to seek after it; and the most of men do look for it in this world, in this life. This, therefore, is their home, their country, their city of habitation. These believers professed that it was not so with them, that this was not their rest; they did but wander about in the world for a season. This profession made Abraham, Gen. 23:4; and Jacob, Gen. 47:8, 9; and David, 1 Chron. 29:15, Ps. 39:12. And that all believers are such, the apostle Peter declares, 1 Epist. 2:11.

If we distinguish these two sorts; ξένοι, "strangers," are such as are always moving, having no abiding place at all,—such as was the state of our Lord Jesus Christ during his ministry, when he "had not where to lay his head;" παρεπίδημοι, or "pilgrims," are such as take up an abode for a season, without an intermixture with the rights, duties, or privileges of the place wherein they are.

Ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς. This they are said to be "on the earth," during their whole continuance here in this world. And an intimation is given of that other state which they looked for, and wherein their interest did lie, namely, heaven.

The sum of the whole is, that they professed themselves called out of the world, separated from the world, as unto interest, design, rest, and reward; having placed their faith, hope, and trust, as unto all these things, in heaven above, and the good things to come.

What it is to be "strangers and pilgrims" in this world; what actings of faith, what frames of spirit ought to be in them that are so; what evils and dangers they shall be assuredly exposed unto; what duties the consideration hereof is a motive unto; what use they may make of the world, and the things of it; what is required to state them in the heavenly polity, whereby, although they are pilgrims, yet they are not vagabonds; would be here too long to explain.

Hebrews 11: 14

From the profession of these patriarchs, that they were "strangers and pilgrims on the earth," the apostle makes an inference from what is contained therein, which doth more expressly declare their faith than the words themselves which they were said to use.

Ver. 14.—Οἱ γὰρ τοιαῦτα λέγοντες ἐμφανίζουσιν ὅτι πατρίδα ἐπιζητοῦσι.

Ver. 14.—For they that say such things, declare plainly that they seek a country.

Οἱ γάρ. "For they that say such things;"—be they who they will that speak such things as these sincerely. Or, these persons, in their circumstances, saying such things as they are recorded in the Scripture to have spoken and publicly avowed.

Ἐμφανίζουσιν. "Declare plainly;" they make it manifest and evident unto all: that is, there is this plain, open meaning and sense in their words. This is that which may easily be known to have been their mind, and what they designed in their words or expressions.

Ἐπιζητοῦσι. And this was, that they did "seek a country," or "a city for themselves," as the Syriac expresseth it; that they "diligently inquired after it," as the word signifies, or sought it with diligence.

There is an entrance in these words on a train of evident consequences, one upon and from another, which he pursues in the next verses. For from their profession he concludes that they "desired a country." And if they did so, it must be either that from whence they came, or some other. That from whence they came it could not be, for the reason he assigns. And if some other, it must be a better than either that from whence they came or where they were; which could be no other but a "heavenly country,"—that is, heaven itself.

And some few things we may observe on this first inference of the apostle; as,

—

Obs. This is the genuine and proper way of the interpretation of the Scripture, when from the words themselves, considered with relation unto the persons speaking them, and all their circumstances, we declare what is their determinate mind and sense.—Hereunto, on the due apprehension of the literal sense of the words themselves, the studious exercise of reason, in all proper ways of arguing, is required.

Some there are who deny all exposition of the Scripture; which is to say, that it ought not to be understood. Some are feigned to suppose that there is nothing needful hereunto but "spiritual illumination." And some think there is no need of any such thing thereunto, but only the common use of our rational faculties, as in the understanding of other arts and sciences. The vanity of all which imaginations I have at large elsewhere discovered and disproved.

The inference of the apostle from these words of the patriarchs is so evident and uncontrollable, that he affirms themselves to "declare plainly" what he declares to be the sense contained in their words. And indeed, take the words precisely, without a consideration of the mind wherewith they were spoken, the circumstances in which, and the end for which they were spoken, and they do not express any peculiar act or fruit of faith; for the very heathen had an apprehension that this life is but a kind of pilgrimage. So speaks Cicero, "De Senectute," cap. xxiii.: "Ex vitâ ita discedo tanquam ex hospitio, non tanquam ex domo. Commorandi enim natura diversorium nobis, non habitandi locum dedit." But under their circumstances, there must be another sense in the words. For they speak them not as the common condition of mankind, but as their peculiar portion in the world, with respect unto the promises of God. And

herein in general they declare a sense of want, of an indigent condition; that it is not with them as with others, who have their portion in this life. And whoever declares a sense of want, at the same time declares a desire of a suitable supply of that want; which is included in the sense of it. And the want which they so declared consisting in this, that in this world they were "strangers and pilgrims,"—the only supply whereof is a country of their own for them to inhabit and enjoy, with all its rights and privileges,—they declared plainly therein that they sought a country: that alone is wanting to any as they are strangers and pilgrims; that alone will cause them to cease so to be. Most men do meet with and are sensible of sundry wants, yet they are such as may be supplied in the place where they are in this world; and their great desire, with their utmost endeavour, is, that they may be here supplied. Such persons, be they never so poor, so indigent, so harbourless, are not "pilgrims on the earth;" this is their home, although they are but ordinarily provided for. Much less are they so who have an affluence of all things unto their satisfaction, though they sometimes meet with a pinch or loss. They only are so who live always in a sense of such wants as this world cannot supply.

Hebrews 11: 15

Whereas these patriarchs did thus express their desire of a country, and diligently sought after it, it may be because, having lost their own country, their relations, and enjoyments, meeting with the difficulties of a wandering course of life, they had a desire to return home again, where they might have quiet habitations. This objection, which, if of force, would overthrow his present design, the apostle obviates and removes in this verse.

Ver. 15.—Καὶ εἰ μὲν ἐκείνης ἐμνημόνευον ἀφ᾽ ἧς ἐξῆλθον, εἶχον ἂν καιρὸν ἀνακάμψαι.

Ver. 15.—And truly, if they had been mindful of that from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned.

There is in the words, 1. A supposition that these pilgrims had originally a country of their own whereunto they did belong. 2. An assertion, first, That they left this country of their own accord; secondly, That in the profession they made of their being strangers and pilgrims, they had no respect unto the country they left, nor desire to return unto it. Which, 3. Is proved by the possibility and facility of such a return.

Εἰ μὲν ἐκείνης. 1. Originally they had a country of their own. This was Ur of the Chaldees, Gen. 11:31; called also Mesopotamia, Acts 7:2, Gen. 24:10; the country "on the other side of the flood," Josh. 24:2. Wherefore respect may be had either unto Ur of the Chaldees, which Abraham first left with his father; or unto Haran on the other side of Euphrates, where he first dwelt.

Ἀφ᾽ ἧς ἐξῆλθον. 2. From this country they went out; they left it, they departed from it upon the command of God. That is, Abraham and Sarah did so; and Isaac with Jacob continuing to follow them in obedience unto the same call, are said to do so also. And they went forth of it not for want, or to increase their riches, for Abraham had possessions and goods therein; nor were they driven out by external force or persecution, as the Jews fancy; but in an obediential compliance with the call of God. And this secured them from all desires of a return.

Εἰ ἐμνημόνευον. 3. In their profession of being strangers and pilgrims, they had not respect unto this country. Εἰ ἐμνημόνευον, "si meminissent," "si memores fuissent," "si recordarentur," "si mentionem fecissent." Syr., "si quaerentes essent." We render it well, "if they had been mindful;" that is, remembered it with a mind and desire after it. It is natural unto all men to remember, to mind and desire their own country. Nothing is more celebrated amongst all sorts of ancient writers, nor more illustrated by examples, than the love of men unto their country, and their fervent desire after the enjoyment of it. Especially it was made evident in many when they came to die:—

"——Et dulces moriens reminiscitur Argos."—Virg. Æn. x. 782.

This love unto, this desire after their native soil, was mortified in these holy persons by faith, acting in obedience to the call of God, so as that no remembrance of their first enjoyments, no impressions from their native air, no bonds of consanguinity among the people, no difficulties they met withal in their wanderings, could kindle in them any peculiar love unto or desire after this country. They minded it not.

Obs. I. It is in the nature of faith to mortify not only corrupt and sinful lusts, but our natural affections, and their most vehement inclinations, though in themselves innocent, if they are any way uncompliant with duties of obedience unto the commands of God.—Yea, herein lies the principal trial of the sincerity and power of faith. Our lives, parents, wives, children, houses, possessions, our country, are the principal, proper, lawful objects of our natural affections; but when they, or any of them, stand in the way of God's commands, if they are

hinderances unto the doing or suffering any thing according to his will, faith doth not only mortify, weaken, and take off that love, but gives us a comparative hatred of them, Matt. 10:37; Luke 14:26; John 12:25.

4. That they had not respect unto this country in the profession they made, the apostle proves from hence, that they might have returned unto it if they had had any mind thereunto. Wherefore should they thus complain, when they might have gone home when they would?

Εἶχον ἂν. Εἶχον ἄν, "they might have had;" or, as some copies read, only εἶχον, they "had;"—which better expresseth the mind of the apostle; for not only they might have had, but really they had (as we shall see), sundry opportunities of returning. Καιρόν, "tempus." Vulg. Lat., "opportunitatem;" "a season," a fit and meet time so to do. For, (1.) From the call of Abraham to the death of Jacob there were two hundred years; so that they had time enough for a return, if they had had a mind unto it. (2.) There was no external difficulty thereunto, by force or opposition. (3.) The way was not so far, but that Abraham sent his servant thither out of Canaan; and Jacob went the same journey with his staff. But they gave sundry evidences also that they would not, on any opportunity, return thither; for the text in the best reading grants that such opportunities they had. So when Abraham sent his servant to take a wife for Isaac from thence, upon his servant's inquiry whether, if the woman would not come with him, he should engage his son to return thither, when so great an opportunity was offered, replied, "Beware that thou bring not my son thither," namely, 'unto the land from whence I came,' Gen. 24:5, 6.

Ἀνακάμψαι. And afterwards, when Jacob, going thither on the like occasion, was increased there greatly, with a numerous family, wives, children, goods, riches and cattle in abundance; yet there he would not stay, but through innumerable hazards returned again into Canaan, Gen. 31. It is therefore most evident, that no opportunity could draw them to think of a return into their own country; and therefore it could not be that with respect whereunto they professed themselves to be strangers and pilgrims,—that was not the country which they did seek and desire.

Obs. II. And it appears hence, that when the hearts and minds of believers are fixed on things spiritual and heavenly, as theirs were, it will take them off from inordinate cleaving unto things otherwise greatly desirable.

Hebrews 11: 16

The apostle hereon draws another inference, wherein he expresseth the true, real object of their faith and desires, with the great advantage and dignity which they obtained thereon.

Ver. 16.—Νυνὶ δὲ κρείττονος ὀρέγονται, τοῦτ᾽ ἔστιν ἐπουρανίου· διὸ οὐκ ἐπαισχύνεται αὐτοὺς ὁ Θεὸς, Θεὸς ἐπικαλεῖσθαι αὐτῶν· ἡτοίμασε γὰρ αὐτοῖς πόλιν.

Νυνὶ δέ, "atqui," "nunc autem." Syr., הָשְׁא דִּין יְדִיעָא, "but now it is known," or "certain;" it appears by the event.

Κρείττονος, "meliorem;" the Syr. adds מִנָּהּ, "than that;" "better than the country which they came from." Beza, "potiorem;" the same with the Syr. Ὀρέγονται, "appetunt," "expetunt," "desiderant;" "earnestly desire," in the present tense, speaking historically of what was then done.

Ἐπαισχύνεται. Vulg. Lat., "confunditur;" Rhem., "is not confounded to be called their God:" very improperly. "Non pudet," "non erubescit." Syr., לָא נָכֵף, "abstained, refrained not."

Ἐπικαλεῖσθαι. Vulg. Lat., "vocari," "cognominari;" to have this title of "their God" to be added to his name.

Ver. 16.—But now they [earnestly] desire a better [country], that is, an heavenly. Wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; for he hath prepared for them a city.

Here at length the apostle declares what was the acting of their faith in that confession which they made, that they were "strangers and pilgrims on the earth." For, 1. It was not a mere complaint of their present state and condition; nor, 2. Did it include a desire after any other earthly country,—not that in particular from whence they came, where were all their dear concernments and relations: wherefore, 3. It must be another country, of another sort and kind, that they desired and fixed their faith upon; which is here declared.

There are three things in the words: 1. What their faith was exercised in, under the profession which they made, namely, that they did "desire a better country, that is, an heavenly." 2. What was the consequent thereof: "God is not ashamed to be called their God." 3. The ground and evidence hereof: "For he hath prepared for them a city."

1. In the first, the apostle declares that in the midst of the world, and against the world, which contemns things future and invisible in comparison of those which are of present enjoyment and use, they lived in the hope, desire, and expectation of a future, invisible, heavenly country. And in this profession testimony is borne unto the truth and excellency of divine promises. Yea,—

Obs. I. To avow openly in the world, by our ways of walking and living, with a constant public profession, that our portion and inheritance is not in it, but in things invisible, in heaven above, is an illustrious act and fruit of faith.—But then, it is incumbent on us that we do not in any thing contradict this testimony. If we love the world like others, use it and abuse it like others, we destroy our own profession, and declare our faith to be vain.

In the first part of the words we may consider, (1.) The manner of their introduction; "but now." (2.) The way of the acting of their faith; it was by "desire." (3.) The object of that desire; "a better, that is, an heavenly country."

Νυνὶ δέ. (1.) "But now." Νῦν, "now," is not in this place an adverb of time, but an illative particle; and joined with δέ, "but," signifies an adversative inference, as עַתָּה is used in the Hebrew, Ps. 2:10, "Be wise now, therefore." 'It was not so with them, they desired not a return into their country; "but they desired."'

Ὀρέγονται. (2.) Their faith acted by desire, earnest desire; so ὀρέγομαι signifies. It is twice used by our apostle in his First Epistle to Timothy, and nowhere else. In the one place it is applied to the desire of episcopacy, chap. 3:1; and in the other unto that of money, chap. 6:10;—which usually are vehement; in the latter place we render it by "coveted," a craving desire. They had an earnest, active desire, which put them on all due ways and means of attaining it. Slothful, inactive desires after things spiritual and heavenly, are of little use in or unto the souls of men.

And this kind of earnest desire includes, [1.] A sense of want, and unsatisfiedness in things present. [2.] A just apprehension of the worth and excellency of the things desired; without which none can have an earnest desire after any thing. [3.] A sight of the way and means whereby it may be attained; without which all desire will quickly fade and fail. Such a desire in any, is an evidence of faith working in a due manner.

Κρείττονος. (3.) That which they thus desired, was "a better, that is, an heavenly;"—"a better," more excellent "country," which is to be supplied: not that wherein they were, the land of Canaan; not that from whence they came, the land of the Chaldees; (in the one they were pilgrims, unto the other they would not return;) but another, a "better."

"Better," may respect degrees or kinds;—a country better in degrees than either of them; better air, better soil; more fruitful, more peaceable: but there was no such on the earth, nor any such did they desire; wherefore it respects a country of another kind, and so the apostle expounds it, "that is, an heavenly."

Τοῦτ᾽ ἐστιν ἐπουρανίου. He had before declared that they "looked for a city that had foundations, whose framer and builder is God," verse 10. Here he expresseth where that city is, and what it is; namely, heaven itself, or a habitation with God in the everlasting enjoyment of him.

The apostle here clearly ascribeth unto the holy patriarchs a faith of immortality and glory after this life, and that in heaven above with God himself, who prepared it for them. But great endeavours are used to disprove this faith of theirs, and overthrow it.

If we may believe the Papists, they were deceived in their expectation. For whereas the apostle teacheth that when they died they looked to go to heaven, they affirm that they came short of it, and fell into a limbus they know not where.

The Socinians grant a state of immortality and glory to be here intended; but they say that these holy men did not look for it, nor desire it, by virtue of any promise of God. But they are said to do so, because it was that which in the purpose of God would ensue; but they had no ground to believe it. There is herein not only boldness, but wantonness in dealing with the Scripture. For this exposition is not only expressly contradictory unto the words of the apostle in their only sense and meaning, but also destructive of his whole argument and design. For if he proves not that their faith wrought in the desire and expectation of heavenly things, he proves nothing at all unto his purpose.

Grotius and his follower would have the country intended to be the land of Canaan, and the city to be Jerusalem,—which yet in a mystical sense were typical of heaven,—for these were promised unto their posterity; than which nothing can be more remote from the mind of the Holy Ghost. For, [1.] That which they looked for and earnestly desired, they did at last enjoy, or their faith was vain, and their hope such as made them ashamed; but they never personally possessed Canaan or Jerusalem. [2.] This country is directly opposed unto that wherein they were pilgrims, which was the land of Canaan, and called "a better country" in opposition unto it; and so could not be the same. [3.] The city which was prepared, was that whose only framer and builder was God; that is, heaven itself. [4.] This country is said to be heavenly; which the land of Canaan and the city of Jerusalem are never said to be, but are opposed unto heaven, or that which is above.

Certainly men follow prejudices, and are under the influence of other corrupt opinions, so as that they advise not with their own minds, who thus express themselves concerning these holy patriarchs. Shall we think that those who were testified unto to have lived by faith, to have walked with God, who gave themselves unto prayer and meditation continually, who denied themselves as unto all worldly accommodations, whose faith produced inimitable instances of obedience, rose no higher in their faith, hope, desires and expectations, than those earthly things wherein their posterity were to have no share comparable unto that of many of the worst enemies of God; the whole of it being at this day one of the most contemptible provinces of the Turkish empire? I no way doubt, but on the promise of the blessed Seed, they lived in that faith of heaven and glory which some that oppose their faith were never acquainted withal. But we see here, that—

Obs. II. Faith looks on heaven as the country of believers, a glorious country, an eternal rest and habitation.—Thence they derive their original. They are born from above; there is their portion and inheritance. God is the one and the other. Thereunto they have right by their adoption; that is prepared for them as a city, a house full of mansions; therein they have their conversation, and that do they continually long after whilst they are here below. For,—

Obs. III. In all the groans of burdened souls under their present trials, there is included a fervent desire after heaven and the enjoyment of God therein. So was there in this complaint of the patriarchs, that they were strangers and pilgrims. Heaven is in the bottom of the sighs and groans of all believers, whatever may outwardly give occasion unto them, Rom. 8:23.

2. The consequent or effect of their faith acting itself in their earnest desires of a heavenly country, is, that "God is not ashamed to be called their God."

Διό. (1.) The word "wherefore" denotes, not the procuring or meritorious cause of the thing itself, but the consequent, or what ensued thereon, as it doth frequently.

Ἐπικαλεῖσθαι. (2.) The privilege granted hereon was, that God would be "called their God." He doth not say that he would be their God, for that he was absolutely in the first call of Abraham; but that he would be so styled, called,—he would take that name and title to himself. So the word signifies, not "vocari," but "cognominari." And the apostle respects what is recorded Exod. 3:6, 15, "I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob: ... this is my name for ever, and this is my memorial unto all generations." He assumes unto

himself this title, whereby he will be known and called on, as by his own name. And this was the greatest honour that they could be made partakers of. He who is the great possessor of heaven and earth, the God of the whole world, of all nations, of all creatures, would be known, styled, and called on, as their God in a peculiar manner; and he distinguisheth himself thereby from all false gods whatever. It is true, he hath revealed himself unto us by a greater and more glorious name; he hath taken another title unto himself, unto the manifestation of his own glory and the comfort of the church, far above it, namely, "The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ:" howbeit, by reason of the covenant made with them, he is yet known by this name. And whilst this name stands upon record, there is yet hope of the recovery of their posterity from their present forlorn, undone condition.

Obs. IV This is the greatest privilege, honour, advantage, and security that any can be made partakers of, that God will bear the name and title of their God. And thus is it with all believers, by virtue of their relation unto Christ, as he declares, John 20:17, "I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God." See 2 Cor. 6:16–18. The privileges and benefits which depend hereon cannot be numbered. Their honour and safety in this life, their resurrection from the dead, as our Saviour proves, and eternal life, flow from thence.

Obs. V. God's owning of believers as his, and of himself to be their God, is an abundant recompence for all the hardships which they undergo in their pilgrimage.

οὐκ ἐπαισχύνεται. (3.) There is the way whereby he came to be so called; he was "not ashamed" to be so called, to take that name upon himself. And sundry things are intimated in this expression; as,—

[1.] Infinite condescension. Though it seems to be a thing infinitely beneath his glorious majesty, yet he is not ashamed of it. It is a condescension in God to take notice of, "to behold the things that are done in heaven and in the earth," Ps. 113:5, 6. How much more doth he so humble himself in taking this title on him! This infinite condescension is intimated in this peculiar expression, "He is not ashamed."

[2.] It is so, that it would be unto him a matter of reproach. So it was in the world; innumerable gods were set up in opposition to him,—idols acted and animated by devils; but all agreed to reproach and despise the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, three poor pilgrims on the earth. Whilst those idols multiplied

unto themselves great swelling titles of vanity, their best conceptions of him were, that he was "the unknown God,"—"incerti Judae Dei." But notwithstanding all the reproaches and contempt of the world, God was not ashamed of them, nor of the title which he had assumed unto himself; nor did he disuse it until he had famished all the gods of the earth, and vindicated his own glorious being and power. But,—

[3.] It is usual that in such negative enunciations the contrary positive is included. So the apostle affirms that he was "not ashamed of the gospel of Christ," Rom. 1:16; that is, he gloried in it, or the knowledge and faith of it were his honour, as he everywhere expresses himself. So, "God was not ashamed;" that is, he took this title to himself as his honour and glory. If it be asked, how this title could be any glory unto God; I say, it was so, in that by virtue thereof, and to fill it up, he glorified his grace, his goodness, his truth, and power, above all that he did besides in the world. For he gives himself this name in the confirmation of his covenant, in and by which he glorifies himself in the communication of all good things, temporal and eternal. Wherefore, to know God as "the God of Abraham," etc., is to know him as he glorifies all the holy properties of his nature in the confirmation of the covenant. Therefore he takes this title as his honour and glory.

Besides, in being thus their God, he doth such things in them and for them, that they shall be a glory to him. For until his own Son came in the flesh, he could not be more glorified on the earth by the obedience of his creatures, which is his glory, than he was in that act of Abraham which the apostle immediately instanceth in. Their graces, their sufferings, their obedience, were his glory. And therefore, as it is said that "he will be for a crown of glory, and for a diadem of beauty unto his people," Isa. 28:5,—his owning of them shall be their crown and diadem; so is it also said that they "shall be a crown of glory in the hand of the LORD, and a royal diadem in the hand of their God," Isa. 62:3. He will, by his Spirit and graces in them, make them his crown and diadem; which he will hold in his hand, to show it unto all the world. Well, therefore, is it said, that "He is not ashamed to be called their God." And we may observe, that,—

Obs. VI. Divine wisdom hath so ordered the relation between God and the church, that that which is in itself an infinite condescension in God, and a reproach unto him in the wicked, idolatrous world, should also be his glory and

honour, wherein he is well pleased.—To trace the steps and declare the mystery of this wisdom, is the principal subject of the Scripture,—too large a subject to be here entered into.

Obs. VII. When God, in a way of sovereign grace, so infinitely condescends, as to take any into covenant with himself, so as that he may be justly styled their God, he will make them to be such as shall be a glory to himself. And,—

Obs. VIII. We may see herein the woful condition of them who are ashamed to be called his people, and make that name a term of reproach unto others.

3. The last clause of the verse, "For he hath prepared for them a city," doth either give a reason why he was not ashamed to be called their God, or contains an evidence that he was so called.

Γάρ. In the first way, the causal conjunction, "for," denotes the reason or cause whence it was that God was not ashamed to be called their God. It is true, they were poor wanderers, pilgrims on the earth, who had neither city nor habitation, so that it might be a shame to own them; but saith the apostle, 'God had not herein respect unto their present state and condition, but that which he had provided for them.' Or it may be an evidence that he was not ashamed to be called their God, in that he did what might become that relation.

Πόλιν. The thing itself, which is either the cause or evidence of that title, is, that "he hath prepared for them a city." What this city is, we have already declared and vindicated, namely, that city whose framer and builder is God,—the same with the heavenly country which they desired.

Ἡτοίμασεν αὐτοῖς. Hereof it is said that God hath "prepared" it for them;—an allusion taken from the disposing of colonies into cities and towns, where all things are ready prepared for their habitation and entertainment. And the word here used is constantly applied unto the preparation of heaven and glory for believers, Matt. 20:23, 25:34; Mark 10:40; John 14:2, 3; 1 Cor. 2:9. And two things are included in it.

(1.) The eternal destination of glory unto all believers: Matt. 25:34, "The kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world;" that is, 'designed, destinated unto you in the eternal counsel of God.' Thus God had prepared a city for these pilgrims in his eternal purpose, to bring them unto rest and glory.

(2.) It denotes the fitting and suiting of that city unto them, as the means of their eternal rest and blessedness. It is such, so ordered, so furnished, so made meet for them, as to answer all the ends of God's being their God, and being so called. So our blessed Saviour useth the word, John 14:2, 3, "I go to prepare a place

for you;" his entrance into heaven being prerequisite unto that glorious state which is promised unto the believers of the new testament, as I have showed elsewhere.

This preparation, therefore, of a city denotes, (1.) An eternal act of the will and wisdom of God, in designing heaven and glory unto the elect. (2.) An act of his power and grace, in the actual producing and disposing of it of that nature as may be an everlasting habitation of rest and glory. Thus,—

Obs. IX. Eternal rest and glory are made sure for all believers in the eternal purpose of the will of God, and his actual preparation of them by grace; which being embraced by faith, is a sufficient supportment for them under all the trials, troubles, and dangers of this life, Luke 12:32.

Hebrews 11: 17–19

Having spoken of the faith of the first patriarchs in the third period of time, the second from the flood, in general, with respect unto their peculiar state as pilgrims in the land of Canaan, he now singles them out in particular, giving particular instances of their faith, beginning with Abraham.

Ver. 17–19.—Πίστει προσενήνοχεν Ἀβραὰμ τὸν Ἰσαὰκ πειραζόμενος, καὶ τὸν μονογενῆ προσέφερεν ὁ τὰς ἐπαγγελίας ἀναδεξάμενος· πρὸς ὃν ἐλαλήθη, ὅτι ἐν Ἰσαὰκ κληθήσεταί σοι σπέρμα· λογισάμενος ὅτι καὶ ἐκ νεκρῶν ἐγείρειν δυνατὸς ὁ Θεὸς, ὅθεν αὐτὸν καὶ ἐν παραβολῇ ἐκομίσατο.

Προσέφερεν. Syr., אַסֵּק לְמַדְבְּחָא, "he lifted him upon the altar;" to intimate, it may be, the event, that he was not actually sacrificed; but the word is the same with that before.

Πειραζόμενος, "tentatus," "cum tentaretur:" "when he was tried," say we; more properly, "when he was tempted," to answer the original word, wherein it is said, "God did tempt Abraham."

Ὁ τὰς ἐπαγγελίας ἀναδεξάμενος, דְּקַבֵּל הֲוָא בְּמוּלְכָנָא, "him whom he had received by promise." But it is the receiving of the promise, and not the accomplishment of it in the birth of Isaac, that the apostle intends; for he considers it as that which includes the blessing Seed, as well as the type of it in Isaac. Vulg. Lat., "in quo susceperat promissiones," "in whom he received the promises;" against the words and sense of the place.

Πρὸς ὃν ἐλαλήθη, "ad quem dictum erat," "to whom it was said." Others, "respectu cujus dictum est," "with respect unto whom," or "concerning whom it was said." For ὅν, "whom," may be referred either unto Abraham or Isaac;—it was said unto Abraham, or it was said concerning Isaac, namely, unto him. We follow the latter sense, "of whom;" that is, concerning whom.

Λογισάμενος. Vulg., "arbitrans," "thinking." It reacheth not the force of the word. "Ratiocinatus," "reasoning, computing, judging." Syr., וְאִתְרַעִי הֲוָא בְּנַפְשֵׁהּ, "he thought," or "computed in his own mind," he reasoned in himself; properly.

Δυνατὸς ὁ Θεός, "posse Deum," "that God could." Others, "potentiâ praeditum esse," "to be endued with power;" that is, to be able. Syr., "that there was faculty," ability or power, "in the hands of God."

Ἐν παραζολῇ. Vulg., "in parabolam." Rhem., "for a parable." "Similitudine." Syr., "in a type." We, "in a figure;" namely, such a figure as represents somewhat else.

Ver. 17–19.—By faith Abraham, when he was tried, [being tempted,] offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only-begotten, of whom it was said, That in Isaac thy seed shall be called, [or, a seed shall be called unto thee.] Accounting that God [was] able even to raise [him] up from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure.

We may consider in these words, 1. The person whose faith is instanced in, which is Abraham. 2. The circumstance of time, and occasion of this exercise of his faith, "when he was tried" or "tempted." 3. The act and effect of his faith, the offering of Isaac. 4. The amplification of the exercise of his faith herein; (1.) From the person of Isaac, he was "his only-begotten son;" (2.) From the consideration of his own person, in that "he had received the promises;" (3.) From the subject-matter of these promises, which was concerning a seed by Isaac. 5. The reconciliation that faith made in his mind between the promises and the present duty which he was called unto, "accounting," etc. 6. The event of his faith and duty, "from whence he received him in a figure."

Ἀζχραάμ. 1. The person instanced in is Abraham, the father of the faithful: and the instance is such as became him who was to be an example in believing unto all that should succeed him; that whereon he was renowned, and esteemed blessed in all generations,—such, so high, so glorious, as nothing under the old testament did equal, nothing under the new can exceed. This was that act and duty of the faith of Abraham whereon he had that signal testimony and

approbation from heaven, Gen. 22:15–18. Hereon a close was put unto all his trials on temptations, and an end unto the repetition of the promise. "Now I know," saith God, "that thou fearest me;"—'It is enough; thou shalt be put to no more difficulties; walk now in assured peace unto the end of thy days.' And the greatness of this instance, with the season of it, teacheth us,—

Obs. I. That God alone knows how to prescribe work and duty proportionate unto the strength of grace received.—He knew that Abraham's faith would carry him through this trial, and thereon he spared him not. As he will enjoin nothing absolutely above our strength, so he is not obliged to spare us in any duty, be it never so grievous, or of what difficult exercise soever it be, which he will give us strength to undergo; as he did here to Abraham.

Obs. II. That ofttimes God reserves great trials for a well-exercised faith.—So this trial befell Abraham when his faith had been victorious in sundry other instances. So he hath called many to lay down their lives by fire, blood, and torments, in their old age.

2. The occasion and season of this exercise of the faith of Abraham, was his being tried, or tempted: "When he was tried." So it is recorded, Gen. 22:1, "God did tempt Abraham,"—וְהָאֱלֹהִים נִסָּה אֶת־אַבְרָהָם. The word is frequently used for to "tempt," often in an evil sense; but it is in itself of a middle signification, and denotes to "try," as unto any end, or with any design good or bad.

But, whereas that which is here ascribed unto God is not without its difficulty, it must be inquired into, and not be left covered under the word "tried," which hides the difficulty from the English reader, but doth not remove it.

God is said to "tempt Abraham;" but the apostle James saith expressly that "God tempteth no man," chap. 1:13. And if these things should be spoken of the same kind of temptation, there is an express contradiction in them. Wherefore I say,—

(1.) That the temptation intended by James is directly unto sin as sin, in all its pernicious consequents; as he fully declares in the next words, "But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed." So God tempteth no man.

(2.) Both the Hebrew and Greek word are of an indifferent signification, including nothing that is evil, but only in general to make a trial; and the Hebrew word is used most frequently in that sense.

(3.) The formality of an active temptation ariseth from an evil design and end. When one is put by another on that which is evil, if his design therein be also evil, that is a formal temptation unto sin. From this design and end in all his actings, Satan is called "the tempter," Matt. 4:3. Thus God tempts no man: all his designs are holy, just, and good.

(4.) The temptations ascribed unto God are of two sorts: [1.] In express command of that which is evil unto us. [2.] In his providential disposal of things, their circumstances and objects of actions, so as men may take occasion to act according unto their own principles and inclinations.

(5.) In these temptations from God, which are always outward, and about men's outward concerns, God acts three ways: [1.] Positively, by supplies of grace to enable those who are tempted to overcome their temptations, or to discharge their duty notwithstanding their temptations; [2.] Negatively, by withholding such supplies; [3.] Privatively, by induration and hardening of the hearts of men, whereon they precipitate themselves into the evil which the temptation leads unto; as we may see in instances of each sort.

[1.] The temptation of Abraham was of the first sort,—it was by a positive command that he should sacrifice his son; which was unlawful for him to do of his own accord, both as it was a sacrifice that God had not ordained, and he had no such power over the life of an obedient son. But in this command, and by virtue of it, God, in an act of his sovereign right and authority over all, changed the nature of the act, and made it lawful, yea a duty, unto Abraham. Isaac was his absolutely, and by way of sovereignty, before and above any interest of Abraham in him. He is the supreme Lord of life and death, and may appoint what means of them he pleaseth. So when he commanded the Israelites to borrow jewels of the Egyptians, which they carried away with them, he did it by translating the right and title unto them from the one people unto the other, Exod. 12:35, 36. Wherefore it was no part of Abraham's trial, that what he was to do had any thing of sin in it; for he knew full well that God's command had made it not only lawful, but his indispensable duty; his trial arose, as we shall see, from other considerations. And the internal work of God under this temptation, was the corroboration of the faith of Abraham unto a blessed victory, which was in his design from the beginning.

[2.] Of the second sort of temptations by providences, was that of Hezekiah, 2 Chron. 32:31. The coming of the ambassadors of the king of Babylon unto him was ordered by divine providence for his trial; and it was his temptation. His

trial was, whether he would magnify God, who had wrought the miracles in his land of slaying the Assyrians, and the going backward of the sun on the dial; or set forth his own greatness, riches, and power: which latter way he closed with. And so God doth continually by his providence present unto men various occasions and objects, whereby what is prevalent in them is excited and drawn out into exercise. All opportunities for good or evil, all advantages of profit, power, honour, service, reputation, are of this nature. Now, in this case of Hezekiah,—and it is so in many others continually,—God acts internally, only negatively; not supplying them with that grace which shall be actually and effectually victorious, but leaving them unto their own strength, whereby they fail and are overcome. So it is said of Hezekiah, that "God left him," (that is, to himself and his own strength, without supplies of actual grace,) "to try him, that he might know all that was in his heart."

[3.] But in this case of temptations by outward providences, especially towards evil men, set on sin in their own hearts and minds, according to their power and opportunities, God acts by the induration or hardening of their hearts, whereon they rush with violence and fury into destructive evils; the way whereof is not here to be inquired into.

(6.) This temptation of Abraham is said to be far his trial. And it is so carried in the story, as if God had done it for his own satisfaction in the faith and love of Abraham; for so he says, on the issue of it, "Now I know that thou fearest God," Gen. 22:12. But these things are spoken after the manner of men. God knew the faith of Abraham what was the strength of it, as also the sincerity of his love, for they were both from himself; he knew what would be the issue of the trial of them, and what he had himself determined concerning the life of Isaac: and therefore "Now I know," is no more but 'Now I have made known,' namely, 'unto thyself and others.' Thus, therefore, he was tried. God by his command, which could not be obeyed but by a vigorous, victorious faith, fervent love, and a reverential fear of God, made it known unto Abraham for his comfort, and to all the church for their example, unto his everlasting honour, what power of grace was in him, and by what principles he was entirely acted in his walking before God.

(7.) The time of this trial of Abraham is marked in the story: "It came to pass after these things," Gen. 22:1. That which is the most remarkable is, that it was after the casting out of Ishmael, which is reported in the foregoing chapter; so that, he being gone from his family, he had no other son but Isaac only, in whom all his expectations did centre, as we shall see immediately. It was also

before the death of Sarah, who probably knew nothing of this matter until afterwards; for it was not her trial, but Abraham's only that was intended. And we may hence observe,—

Obs. III. That faith must be tried; and, of all graces, it is most suited unto trial.

Obs. IV. That God proportions trials for the most part unto the strength of faith.

Obs. V. Yea, great trials in believers are an evidence of great faith in them, though not understood either by themselves or others before such trials.

Obs. VI. Trials are the only touchstone of faith, without which men must want the best evidence of its sincerity and efficacy, and the best way of testifying it unto others. Wherefore,—

Obs. VII. We ought not to be afraid of trials, because of the admirable advantages of faith in and by them. See James 1:2–4; 1 Pet. 1:6, 7. And,—

Obs. VIII. Let them be jealous over themselves who have had no especial instances of the trial of their faith. And,—

Obs. IX. True faith being tried, will in the issue be victorious.

Προσενήνοχεν τὸν Ἰσαάκ. 3. The third thing considerable in these words is the act and effect of his faith, "He offered up Isaac;" and who Isaac was, what was his relation unto him, and what were his circumstances, he afterwards declares. The command was to "offer him for a burnt-offering;" which was, first to be slain, and then consumed with fire. Accordingly, the apostle affirms that he offered him, whereas we know how he was delivered. But the meaning is, that he actually and fully obeyed the command of God herein. He did it in will, heart, and affections, though it was not eventually done; and the will is accepted for the deed. But the true meaning of the words is, that he fully obeyed the command of God. God commanded him to offer him, and he did so unto the uttermost of what was required in the command. Neither did the command of God respect the event, nor was Abraham obliged to believe that he should actually be offered in sacrifice. But he believed that it was his duty to obey the command of God, and he did it accordingly. Look, therefore, in what sense God commanded Isaac to be offered, in the same did Abraham offer him; for he fulfilled the command of God. And we may see his full compliance with the divine command in the particulars of his obedience, For,—

(1.) He parted with his own interest in him, and gave him up wholly unto God and his will; which was the principal thing in every offering or sacrifice. This God takes notice of in an especial manner, as that which answered his mind, "Thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, from me," Gen. 22:12.

(2.) He complied with the way designed in the command for the giving him up unto God, namely, as a sacrifice by blood and fire, wherein himself was to be the offerer. Herein was the greatest convulsion of nature; his faith had an exercise above it, and beyond it. But this was that which put nature unto it to the utmost,—to have an only-begotten son slain by the effusion of his blood, visibly under his eyes, yea, to do it with his own hand, and to stand by his consumption in the fire, was an unparalleled trial. We read, indeed, in heathen stories, and in holy writ with reference unto Moloch, that some in overwhelming distresses, inward and outward, for their supposed advantage and deliverance, have sacrificed some of their children in a kind of rage and fury, out of hopes to be gainers by it. But this was not the case of Abraham; he was at perfect peace with God and man, with an affluence of all other things unto the uttermost of his desires. His son had relation unto him in all those singular circumstances which we shall consider. On all accounts he was dear unto him, unto as great a height as it is possible for natural affection to rise unto. Being every way sedate in his mind, without hope or expectation of advantage, yea, to the utter ruin of his family and posterity, he complies with the command for the offering him with his own hand a bloody sacrifice unto God.

(3.) He did as much for the trial of his faith as if his son had been actually slain. There could not have been a greater assault upon it in case he had been offered. He looked on him as dead under his eye; and thence, as we shall see, he is said to "receive him in a figure." He was, as unto his faith, in the same condition as if he had been dead. Wherefore,—

(4.) In compliance with the command of God, he shut his eyes as it were against all difficulties and consequents, resolving to venture Isaac, posterity, truth of promises, all, upon the authority of God; wherein he is principally proposed as our example.

Whereas, therefore, the obedience of Abraham did every way answer the command of God, that being that he should offer his son Isaac, he is justly said to have done it accordingly, though as unto his death actually God otherwise disposed of things in the event.

What in the meantime was the working of the faith of Abraham with respect unto the promise, we shall afterwards inquire. The things we are taught herein are,—

Obs. X. Where there is a divine command, evidencing itself unto our consciences so to be, it is the wisdom and duty of faith to close its eyes against whatsoever seems insuperable in difficulties or inextricable in consequents.—Faith may and ought to consider the difficulties that are in obedience, so far as to be prepared for them, provided against them, and resolved to conflict with them. But in case there appear that in them which seems to be overwhelming, which reason cannot contend withal, and when it can by no means look through the consequents of obedience, whether they will be good or no, it will commit the whole unto the authority and veracity of God in his commands and promises, casting out all objections that it cannot solve. For this is the faith of Abraham celebrated, not only in the offering of Isaac, but with respect unto his birth also. "Against hope he believed in hope.... He considered not his own body," Rom. 4:18, 19.

Obs. XI. Divine revelations did give such an evidence of their being immediately from God unto those who received them, that though in all things they contradicted their reason and interest, yet they received them without any hesitation.—If there had been the least room left for a scruple whether the command given unto Abraham was immediately from God or no, whether it was such as, either unto its original or means of communication, might be subject unto any mistake, he could never with any satisfaction have complied with it. See my discourse of the Divine Authority of the Scriptures.

Obs. XII. The great glory and commendation of the faith of Abraham consisting in this, that without all dispute, hesitation, or rational consideration of objections to the contrary, by a pure act of his will, he complied with the authority of God,—which in some sense may be called blind obedience, wherein the soul resigns the whole conduct of itself unto another,—it is a height of blasphemy and profaneness in the popish votaries, especially in the order of the Jesuits, that by vow and oath they oblige themselves unto the same kind of obedience to the commands of those who are their superiors; which their founder, in his Epistle ad Fratres Lusitanos, had the impudence to confirm with the example of Abraham. And hence is it come to pass, that whereas this honour and prerogative are ascribed solely unto God, namely, that his commands are to be obeyed in all things, without examination, reasonings or consideration, as to the matter of them, the righteous government of the world

is absolutely provided for; seeing he neither will nor can command any thing but what is holy, just, and good: so, since the ascription of such an authority unto men as to secure blind obedience unto all their commands, as innumerable evils have ensued thereon, as murders, seditions, and the like; so it takes away all grounds of peace and security from mankind. For who knows what a crew or sort of men called "the Jesuits' Superiors," known only by their restless ambition and other misdemeanours among mankind, will command their vassals, who are sworn unto blind obedience unto them, to perpetrate and execute whatever they enjoin. Let princes and others flatter themselves as they please, if these men, as they profess, are no less obliged in conscience to execute whatever their superiors shall command and enjoin, than Abraham was to obey God in his command for the sacrificing of his only son, they hold their lives on the mercy and good nature of these superiors, who are always safe out of the reach of their revenge. This ascription of a Godlike power to require a blind obedience unto their commands, to be yielded without any exercise or debate of reason, is that which it is a marvel how it is endured among mankind, especially since they have had such experience of its fruits and effects. Yea, though it be that which is absolutely due unto the infinite sovereignty of the Divine Being, yet God designing to govern us according to the principles, powers, and faculties of our natures, which he himself hath given us unto this end, that we may comply with his rule in a way of obedience, requires nothing from us but what is "reasonable service." But what may be expected from these men, known only by their evil designings, who can tell?

Obs. XIII. It is a privilege and advantage to have an offering of price to offer to God, if he call for it.—And such are our lives, our names, our reputations, our relations, estates, liberties; as Abraham had his Isaac: it is so, I say, if we have hearts to make use of it.

Obs. XIV. Obedience begun in faith, without any reserves, but with a sincere intention to fulfil the whole work of it, is accepted with God as if it were absolutely complete.—So the confessors of old, delivered by divine Providence from death, when the sentence of it was denounced against them, were always reckoned in the next degree to martyrs.

4. The fourth thing to be considered, is the amplification of this obedience of Abraham, in the various circumstances of it; as,—

Τὸν μονογενῆ. (1.) From the person of Isaac, whom he so offered. He was his "only-begotten." In what sense Isaac is said to be the only-begotten of Abraham, who had one son before him and many after him, is declared partly in the following words, "Concerning whom it was said, In Isaac shall thy seed be called." He is that only son in whom the promise of the seed shall be accomplished. Further to clear the reason of this expression, it may be observed, [1.] That the sons of Abraham by Keturah were not yet born. [2.] Ishmael, who was born, was before this, by the command of God himself, put out of his family, as one that should not be the heir of his family, by whom his seed should be reckoned. [3.] He was his only-begotten by Sarah, who was concerned in all this affair between God and him no less than himself. [4.] The Holy Ghost taketh into consideration the whole state of things between God and Abraham, in his call, in his separation from the world, in the covenant made with him, in what he was designed unto in the promise made unto him concerning the blessed Seed; in all which Isaac alone had any concernment; and if he had failed, though Abraham had had an hundred children, they must have all fallen to the ground. Therefore, as Abraham was placed in these circumstances, he was his only-begotten son. [5.] This expression is used in the Scripture sometimes for as much as peculiarly and entirely beloved, above all others, Prov. 4:3; and there is great respect had hereunto.

The trial of the faith of Abraham may be referred unto two heads: first, What it was exercised withal; and secondly, What arose from the opposition that seemed to be between the command and the promise. And it is here distributed by the apostle into these two parts. For the conflict which he had with his own natural affections, it is intimated in this expression, "His only-begotten son," whom he most dearly and entirely affected.

Abraham was very remote from being a person savage or cruel, like Lamech, that could boast of his killing and wounding, Gen. 4:23. Nor did he design that stoical apathy which was so falsely and foolishly boasted of by some of old. Nor was he ἄστοργος, "without natural affection;" which the apostle reckons among the worst vices of the heathens, Rom. 1:31. Yea, he was such a tender and affectionate father, that the sending of Ishmael out of his family was more than he could well bear, until God comforted him in it, Gen. 21:11–13. What now must the working of his heart needs be towards Isaac, a son whom he had so long waited for, and prayed for; the only child of his dear wife, the companion of all his wanderings, troubles, and trials; who was now grown up, as is most probable, unto the age of sixteen or seventeen years, and had engaged his

affections by all ways possible; the stay of his age, the life of his family,—his only hope and comfort in this world? And how was he to deal with him? Not to send him out of his family with some provision and a guide, as he sent Ishmael; not to part with him for a time into a foreign country; but to take him himself, to bind him, slay him with a knife, and then to burn him unto ashes. Who can conceive what convulsions of nature must needs be occasioned hereby? Who can put himself into these circumstances without trembling and horror? The advantages also which Satan might hence take to excite unbelief with respect unto the command of God, are obvious to all. How easy was it for him, under that hurry which naturally his affections were subject unto, to make that ensnaring inquiry which he did unto Eve, "And hath God said so?" and to prevent the working of faith, as he did then, by a sudden reply unto his own question, 'Nay, but God knoweth that it is otherwise, that it is not the death of thy son that he requires;' or, 'It is not God that gave the command. Can it be thought that he who is infinitely good, benign, and gracious, should command one who fears him and loves him thus to tear and rend his own bowels, to devour his own offspring, his only son? Hearken a little unto the outcries of love, fear, and sorrow, and be not too hasty to be the executioner of all thine own joy.'

Here, then, the divine power of faith manifested itself under all that storm of disorder which his affections were exposed unto; and in the midst of all the temptations whereunto from thence he was liable, it preserved the mind of this holy person, quiet, sedate, under an annihilation of his own will, unto a destruction of all disorder in nature, in security against the power of temptations, in an entire resignation of himself and all his concernments unto the sovereign pleasure and will of God. "It is the LORD," prevented all murmurings, silenced all reasonings, and preserved his mind in a frame fit to approach unto God in his holy worship; whereas Moses himself, on far less provocation, resented it so far as not to sanctify the name of God aright in the administration of an ordinance, Num. 20:10–12. And it is hence evident, that,—

Obs. XV. The power of faith in its conflict with and conquest over natural affections, when their unavoidable bent and inclination are contrary unto the will of God, whereby they are exposed to receive impressions from temptations, is an eminent part of its glory, and a blessed evidence of its sincerity.—Such is its trial in the loss of dear relations, or their irrecoverable misery in this world, wherein natural affections are apt to indispose the mind, and to hinder it from

a quiet submission unto the will of God; whereby David greatly failed in the case of Absalom. But another instance like this of Abraham there never was, nor ever shall be. And all less cases are contained in the greater.

(2.) The excellency of the faith and obedience of Abraham is set forth by the consideration of his own circumstances with respect unto Isaac. And this is expressed, [1.] In general, that "he had received the promises;" [2.] In particular, as unto that part of the promises wherein his present fact was immediately concerned, namely, that "in Isaac should his seed be called."

Τὰς ἐπαγγελίας. [1.] It is expressed, as that which recommends his obedience, that he had "received the promises;" which needs some explanation.

1st. It is twice said in this chapter, that neither he nor any other believer under the old testament did "receive the promise," verses 13, 39; but here it is affirmed that he "did receive the promises." The solution is easy. For in those two other places, by "the promise," the thing promised is intended. And this sufficiently discovers the vanity of those expositors who would have these promises to respect principally, yea only, the land of Canaan, with the numerous posterity of Abraham therein; for this was fully enjoyed by them under the old testament, as much as ever it was to be enjoyed, then when the apostle affirms concerning them, that "they received not the promise." But Abraham is said to "receive the promises" formally, inasmuch as God made and gave them unto him, and he believed them, or received them by faith.

2dly. The Scripture calleth the same thing indifferently "the promise" or "the promises." Usually it is called the "promise," Acts 2:39, 13:32, Rom. 4:14, 16, 20, Gal. 3:17; sometimes "the promises," Rom. 9:4, 15:8. For, (1st.) It was originally one single promise only, as given unto Adam. (2dly.) The grace that is in it is one and the same. (3dly.) The principal subject of them all is one, namely, Christ himself. But here is mention of "promises," (1st.) Because the same promise was several times renewed unto Abraham, so as that formally he received many promises, though materially they were but one. (2dly.) Sundry things being contained in the same promise of different natures, they do constitute distinct promises. An account of the nature, subject, and design of these promises, see in the exposition on chap. 6:13–18.

[2.] There is the application of these promises as unto their accomplishment unto Isaac. For whereas they concerned a seed, it was said of him that "in Isaac his seed should be called," Gen. 21:12. He had not only a promise that he should

have a son by Sarah his wife, whence he was called the child or son of the promise, Gal. 4:23, 28; but also the accomplishment of the promise was expressly confined unto him, by God himself.

Ver. 18.—"Of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called."

Πρὸς ὃν. "Of whom it was said." "Of" or "concerning whom;"—that is, of Isaac unto Abraham; not unto Abraham concerning Isaac, though both be equally true. The words were spoken unto Abraham concerning Isaac; but the word "whom" immediately relates to Isaac.

Ἐλαλήθη. "It was said;"—that is, by God himself; it was not a conclusion that he made out of other promises, it was not told him by any other, but was expressly spoken unto him by God himself, and that on the occasion of sending Ishmael out of his family, that he might have full assurance of the accomplishment of the promises in him. And this was that which gave the greatest exercise unto his faith, as we shall see immediately.

Κληθήσεταί σοι σπέρμα. The Hebraism in the original, בְּיִצְחָק יִקָּרֵא לְךָ זָרַע, "In Isaac shall a seed be called unto thee," is preserved by the apostle, Ἐν Ισαὰκ κληθήσεταί σοι σπέρμα,—that is, 'The seed promised unto thee from the beginning shall be given in him; the traduction of it into the world shall be through him and no other.'

(3.) It remains, then, only to consider what was the seed so promised, or what was the principal subject of these promises. Grotius with his follower, and the Socinian expositors, reduce these promises unto two heads: [1.] That of a numerous posterity. [2.] That this posterity should inhabit and enjoy the land of Canaan for an inheritance. But this is directly to contradict the apostle, who affirms, that when they had possessed the land of Canaan almost unto the utmost period of its grant unto them, they had not received the promises; that is, the accomplishment of them, verse 39.

I do not deny but that these things also were in the promises annexed unto that which was principal in them, as means and pledges of its accomplishment, as I have at large elsewhere demonstrated; but the principal subject-matter of the promise was no other but Christ himself, with the whole work of his mediation for the redemption and salvation of the church. This is so evident, from the respect herein unto the first promise given unto our first parents, and the faith of the church therein, not to be weakened by promises of an inferior nature; from the repeated words of the promise, namely, that "in this seed all the nations of the earth should be blessed," which have nothing of truth in

them but with respect unto Christ; from the faith of all the saints of the old testament, with all their institutions of worship; and from the exposition given of it in the New Testament, as Acts 2:38, 39, Gal. 3:16; that it needs no confirmation.

Supposing, therefore, what we have spoken before concerning the exercise of faith from his natural affections, with reference unto his only son, and this was the present case of Abraham:—God had called him from all his relations and enjoyments, to follow him, and live unto him in all things. To encourage him hereunto, he solemnly promiseth unto him that from his loins the blessing Seed, the Redeemer of himself and the world, should proceed; which was the highest privilege that he could possibly be made partaker of: as also, that as unto the way and means of the accomplishment of this promise, he should have a numerous posterity, whom God would fix and preserve in the land of Canaan, until the original promise should be actually accomplished. In this promise of God did he place his whole temporal and eternal felicity; wherein he was blessed, and without which he was most miserable. In process of time he hath a son born, according to this promise, concerning whom God expressly declares, that in and by him this promise should be accomplished. Hereby the whole truth and all the benefit of the promise did absolutely depend on the life and posterity of Isaac, without which it could not be fulfilled. Add hereunto, that before this Abraham had prayed that the promise might be preserved in Ishmael; which God expressly denied him, Gen. 17:18, 19, confining it unto the son of Sarah. In this state of things, when he was under a full persuasion, and the highest satisfaction, that he saw and enjoyed the assured means of the accomplishment of the promises, God commands him to take this Isaac, and offer him for a burnt-offering; that is, first slay him, and then burn him to ashes.

Who can conceive with what heart Abraham received the thunder of this command? what perplexities he was cast into, or at least would have been so, had not faith carried him through them all? He seems to be pressed unavoidably with one or the other of the greatest evils in the world, either of them eternally ruinous unto him: either he must disobey the command of God, or he must let go his faith in the promise; either of them being filled with eternal ruin.

What was the faith of Abraham in particular, how his thoughts wrought in him, is not expressed in the original story: yet are two things plain therein; [1.] That he was not cast into any distraction of mind, any disorderly passions, complaints, or repinings; [2.] That he immediately, without delay, addressed

himself to yield punctual obedience unto the command of God, Gen. 22:1–3. As unto the promise of God, there is no intimation in the story of what his thoughts were concerning it; only it appears in general, that he left unto God the care of his own truth and veracity, concluding, that as sure as he who had commanded was to be obeyed, so he that had promised was to be believed, he being more concerned in the accomplishment of the promise than Abraham himself could be. Wherefore, confirming himself against suggestions, temptations, fleshly reasonings, and giving himself up wholly unto the sovereignty of God, he proceeded in his obedience.

Howbeit, our apostle makes a more particular discovery of the working of Abraham's faith under this trial in the next verse, where we shall consider it. And we see here,—

Obs. I. That in great and inextricable difficulties, it is the duty, wisdom, and nature of faith, to fix itself on the immense properties of the divine nature, whereby it can effect things inconceivable and incomprehensible.—So was it in this case of Abraham. See Isa. 40:28–31.

Obs. II. God may justly require the assent and confidence of faith unto all things which infinite power and wisdom can effect, though we can neither see, nor understand, nor comprehend the way whereby it may be accomplished.—For faith being placed and fixed on him as God, as God almighty and infinitely wise, it is our duty to believe whatever infinite power and wisdom can extend unto, if it be required of us in any instance, as it was here of Abraham, by divine revelation. See Isa. 50:10.

Obs. III. God's dealings with his church sometimes are such, as that unless we shut our eyes and stop our ears unto all objections and temptations against his promises, opening them only unto divine sovereignty, wisdom, and veracity, we can never abide in a comfortable course of obedience.—So is it at this day, wherein all the whole state of things in the world consists in a combination against the accomplishment of divine promises towards the church. See Ezek. 37:1, 2, 11–14.

Obs. IV. This is the glory of faith, that it can spiritually compose the soul in the midst of all storms and temptations, under darkness as unto events, so as that it shall in a due manner attend unto all duties of worship and obedience, so as to sanctify the name of God in them, and not to provoke him with any irregularities of mind or actions; as once it fell out with Moses.

Obs. V. In any surprisal with seemingly insuperable difficulties, it is our duty immediately to set faith at work; not to consult with flesh and blood, nor hearken unto carnal reasonings or contrivances, which will but entangle us and increase our distress.—So did Abraham, who immediately, upon the command of God, applied himself unto his duty. In such cases, whatever arguings or reasonings do arise in our minds before faith hath had its due exercise in resignation, trust, and acquiescency in the will of God, are pernicious unto the soul, or destructive unto its comforts. They weaken it, entangle it, and make it unfit to do or suffer. But when faith hath had its work, and hath brought the soul unto a due composure in the will of God, it may take a sedate consideration of all rational means of relief unto its advantage.

Obs. VI. There may sometimes, through God's providential disposal of all things, be an appearance of such an opposition and inconsistency between his commands and promises, as nothing but faith bowing the soul unto divine sovereignty can reconcile, Gen. 32:8–12.

These, and sundry other things of the like nature, we may learn from this great example of the faith of the father of the faithful, here proposed unto us: all which deserve to be handled more at large than the nature of the present work will allow.

The especial working of the faith of Abraham in this case of distress, with the event of it, is declared, verse 19.

Ver. 19.—"Accounting that God [was] able to raise [him] up even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure."

1. The immediate object of his faith in general was the power of God; that "God was able." 2. The application of that power by faith, was unto the resurrection of the dead; "to raise him from the dead." 3. The manner of its effectual working in him; it was in a way of reasoning, or of computing one thing from another. 4. The event hereof was, (1.) The reception of his son back again unto himself, whom he had offered in the manner before described. (2.) The manner of it; it was "in a figure." Which things must be explained.

1. [The immediate object of his faith was the power of God.] But unto the right understanding of this, some things must be premised which are supposed in the words; as,—

(1.) Abraham firmly believed, not only the immortality of the souls of men, but also the resurrection from the dead. Had he not done so, he could not have betaken himself unto this relief in his distress. Other things he might have

thought of, wherein God might have exerted his power; but he could not believe that he would do it in that which itself was not believed by him. And it is in vain to inquire what especial revelation Abraham had of these things; for the resurrection from the dead, which includes the other, was an essential part of the first promise, or no relief is tendered therein against the curse, which was a return unto the dust. And,—

Obs. I. It is good for us to have our faith firmly built on the fundamental articles of religion, such as these are; without which we cannot act it on particular occasions and trials, wherein an application is made of such fundamental principles unto our present cases.

Δύνατος ὁ Θεός. (2.) He owned the omnipotency of God, as able to produce inconceivable effects. He did not limit God, as they did in the wilderness, as the psalmist at large describes their unbelief, Ps. 78:19, 20, 40, 41. He rested on this, that the power of God could extend itself unto things by him past finding out and incomprehensible. This was the life and soul as it were of the faith of Abraham; he believed that the power of God was infinitely sufficient to secure his truth and veracity in his promises, though he could neither conceive nor understand the way whereby it was to be done. And,—

This is the life of faith at present in all that truly believe. Every thing in the world seems to lie cross unto the accomplishment of most eminent divine promises, and wherein the church, next unto things eternal, is most eminently concerned; but yet though things are very dark and dreadful, they are not in such a dismal strait as they were when the father of the faithful had his knife at the breast of him on whose life the accomplishment of all the promises did depend. Yet he rested in the power of God to secure his own veracity; and so may we do also at present. Wherefore,—

(3.) Abraham still firmly believed the accomplishment of the great promise, although he could not discern the way whereby it would be fulfilled. Had his faith failed herein, his obedience had been needless and useless. And this is the last anchor of faith. It cleaves unto and rests upon the truth of God in his promises, against all objections, temptations, and oppositions, although they are such as reason in its highest exercise can neither conflict with nor conquer. And unto this end, God, who permits such objections to arise against it, or what he hath promised, yea, disposeth such trials and difficulties unto it, as shall be insuperable unto all the rational powers of our souls, giveth security in and from himself alone against them all. "God who cannot lie hath promised," Tit. 1:2.

And in further confirmation hereof unto us, "he sware by himself," Heb. 6:13. And that faith which cannot rest in God himself, and the consideration of his properties engaged for the accomplishment of his promises, without other helps or corroborating testimonies, yea, against all conclusions and determinations of sense and reason, is weak, if it be sincere, Isa. 50:10.

On these principles, which were fixed immovably in his mind, he,—

Λογισάμενος. 2. Reasoned within himself as unto the way and manner whereby the power of God would make good his truth in the accomplishment of the promise: "Accounting;" that is, computing, reasoning in himself from the principles of faith that were fixed in his mind. God making a covenant with him, or taking him into covenant with himself, had peculiarly revealed himself unto him by the name of God Almighty, Gen. 17:1. This, therefore, did Abraham principally consider in all his walking before him. And now he thought was the season wherein he should see an instance of the almighty power of God. How this would work and exert itself, as yet he could not understand; for he had no reserve in his mind that Isaac should not die. This, therefore, on the aforesaid principles, first presented itself unto him, that if there were no other way, yet after he had slain him, and burnt him to ashes, God could again raise him from the dead.

Καὶ ἐκ νεκρῶν ἐγείρειν. 3. The manner of the expression declares the greatness of the matter spoken of, in his apprehension: "Even from the dead." It is not said, as we supply it, "to raise him up from the dead," but only, "to raise from the dead." The resurrection of the dead is that which is proposed as the object of his faith; the application of it unto Isaac, and at that season, is included in what is expressed. This, then, is that which he reckoned upon in himself: (1.) That God was able to raise the dead in general. (2.) That he could so raise up Isaac after his death; which in this reasoning he supposed. (3.) That after this resurrection, if it should so fall out, it would be the same individual person that was offered; whereby the word which he spake unto his servants, that he and the lad would go and worship and come again to them, Gen. 22:5, would be made good.

But these reasonings were not immediate acts of faith, as unto the object of them, in their application unto Isaac, but effects of it. The conclusions he made were true and right, but the thing itself, or the raising of Isaac from the dead, was not the object of faith; for it was not to be, and nothing but what is true, and what will be eventually true, can be believed with faith divine. No man ever was or can be obliged to believe that to be, which is not; or that that shall be,

which shall never be. Only, whereas there was nothing herein that was inconsistent with any divine revelation, he did so far assent unto the possibility of this event, as to quiet his mind in the work and duty which he was called unto.

It is evident, therefore, that by faith he devolved the whole event of things on the sovereignty, power, and truth of God; and in his reasoning thereon thought it most likely that God would raise him from the dead.

4. Lastly, The event of things is expressed, answering the faith of Abraham absolutely, and his reasonings also, in a figurative compliance with them: "From whence also he received him in a figure."

(1.) The promise was absolutely secured; Isaac was preserved alive, that in him his seed might be called.

Ἐκομίσατο. (2.) Abraham's obedience was fully accomplished. For he had parted fully with Isaac; he was no more his than if he had been actually dead; whence it is said that "he received him again." He was made to be God's own, to belong unto him alone, as devoted; and God gave him again unto Abraham.

Ὁθεν καί. (3.) Isaac was considered in the state of the dead,—that is, under the command of God, and in his father's determination; so as that the apostle says he "offered him;" and therefore it is said that he "received him" from that state. "Whence also:" One expositor conjectures that respect is had herein unto Abraham's first receiving of Isaac at his nativity from the womb of Sarah, which was as dead; than which nothing can be more remote from the sense of the place, unless it be some other conjectures of the same expositor on the like occasions.

(4.) But whereas Isaac did not die, was not actually dead, he is said to "receive him" from that state only "in a figure." See the various translations of the word here used before. Conjectures have been multiplied about the meaning of this word: "in a figure, a parable, a representation, a resemblance." I shall not trouble the reader with them; it is not my manner. Nor have I here any thing to add unto what was first fixed on by the most judicious Calvin, who hath herein been followed by all sober expositors: "He received him as from the dead, in a figure or resemblance of the resurrection from the dead." For whereas he had offered him up in faith, and thereon looked on him as dead, resting his soul in the power of God alone to raise him from the dead, his restoration, or giving him unto him again, had a complete representation of the resurrection of the dead at the last day.

So have I briefly passed through this great instance of the faith of the father of the faithful, with some considerations of the conflicts which he had with temptations, and his conquest over them. And these things, I confess, require a more full search into and contemplation of, if the nature of my present design would admit of it. But yet, when I should have done my uttermost, I can easily discern how short I should fall, not only of discovering the depth of the treasures of divine wisdom herein, but also of the workings and transactions of faith in and by all the faculties of his soul in Abraham himself. I leave them, therefore, as objects of their meditation who have more skill and experience in these divine mysteries than I have attained unto. Some things we may yet observe from the whole; as,—

Obs. II. The privileges and advantages that Abraham obtained on this trial, exercise, and victory of his faith. For, 1. He had hereon the most illustrious immediate testimony from heaven of God's acceptance and approbation of him that ever any one had in this world, unless it were Jesus Christ himself, Gen. 22:11, 12. 2. The promise was solemnly confirmed unto him by the oath of God, which gave him absolutely infallible security that there was no reserved condition in it, on which its accomplishment was suspended, verses 16–18. 3. He was constituted "heir of the world," verses 17, 18; and, 4. The "father of the faithful." And, 5. An end was put unto all his trials and temptations. After this he was exercised with no more difficulties, but walked in peace unto the end of his days. And we may be assured that,—

Obs. III. Faith obtaining the victory in great trials (as suffering for the truth), and carrying us through difficult duties of obedience, shall have a reward even in this life, in many unspeakable spiritual privileges and advantages.

This one instance is sufficient in itself to confirm the assertion of the apostle and his whole intention, namely, as unto the power and efficacy of faith in carrying believers through all difficulties and oppositions which they may meet withal in the profession of the gospel and the course of their obedience. For if we consider both parts of Abraham's trial, 1. As unto nature, in the sacrificing of his only son, for whose sake he had undergone a wearisome pilgrimage; 2. As unto grace and faith itself, in the dread of the command, and open appearance of the defeatment of the promise; nothing equal to it can befall us in our profession.

Obs. IV. This example was peculiarly cogent unto the Hebrews, who gloried in being the children of Abraham, from whom they derived all their privileges and advantages. Wherefore they were justly pressed with this instance, as they were before by our Saviour, when he told them that "if they were the children of Abraham, they would do the works of Abraham," John 8:39. And an encouragement it was unto them, to abide in that faith wherein he had had such glorious success.

Obs. V. We may also consider, that, 1. If we are children of Abraham, we have no reason to expect an exemption from the greatest trials, that the same faith which was in him is able to conflict withal. 2. We have no reason to be afraid of the fiercest and severest trials that may befall us, having so great an instance that faith is able to carry us through them all victoriously. 3. Difficult duties of obedience warranted by divine command, and successes of faith under trials, shall have a present reward in this life. "In keeping thy commandments there is great reward." 4. Though death should seem to pass on any of the promises concerning the church, yet nothing need shake our faith, whilst we can believe the resurrection of the dead. They will be given as in a figure of it.

Hebrews 11: 20

Πίστει περὶ μελλόντων εὐλόγησεν Ἰσαὰκ τὸν Ἰακὼβ καὶ τὸν Ἠσαῦ.

Ver. 20.—By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come.

Isaac was a holy person, who, though a pilgrim, yet, as far as appeareth, spent most of his time in peace, without great perils and dangers. Wherefore there is less spoken of him, and the trials of his faith, than either of his father or his son. Howbeit there is no doubt but that this son of the promise led his life in the faith of the promise; and the promise was particularly renewed unto him, Gen. 26:4.

The apostle chooseth to instance in his faith with respect unto the blessing of his sons, which was in his old age, and was the most eminent act of it, because of the conveyance of the promise unto his seed made thereby.

The story which he reports is recorded Gen. 27. And there is none in the Scripture filled with more intricacies and difficulties, as unto a right judgment of the thing related, though the matter of fact be clearly and distinctly set down.

The whole represents unto us divine sovereignty, wisdom, and faithfulness, working effectually through the frailties, infirmities, and sins of all the persons concerned in the matter. It was taken for granted by them all, that, by God's institution and appointment, the promise, with all the benefits and privileges of it, was to be conveyed by paternal benediction unto one of the sons. Hereon there had been sundry indications of the mind of God, as unto the person to whom it was to be communicated. There was so in the answer of God unto Rebekah, when the children strove in her womb, when he said unto her, "The elder shall serve the younger," Gen. 25:23. And an immediate indication hereof was given in their birth, wherein Jacob laid hold on the heel of Esau, as being to supplant him, verse 26. It was further manifest when they grew up, partly by the profaneness of Esau, evidenced in marrying evil and idolatrous wives; and partly in his selling his birthright for a mess of pottage, verses 32–34. Yet did not all this prevent the miscarriages of them all in the communication and obtaining this blessing; namely, of Isaac, Rebekah, and Jacob. For,—

1. Whatever may be spoken in excuse of Isaac, it is certain he failed greatly in two things: (1.) In his inordinate love unto Esau, whom he could not but know to be a profane person, and that on so slight an account as eating of his venison, Gen. 25:28. (2.) In that he had not sufficiently inquired into the mind of God in the oracle that his wife received concerning their sons. There is no question on the one hand, but that he knew of it; nor on the other, that he did not understand it. For if the holy man had known that it was the determinate will of God, he would not have contradicted it. But this arose from want of diligent inquiry by prayer into the mind of God.

2. As for Rebekah, there is no doubt but that she was infallibly certain that it was the mind and will of God that Jacob should have the blessing. So far she had a sufficient ground of faith. But her contrivance for the obtaining of it, when she ought to have committed the event unto the providence of God, whose word was engaged for it, cannot be approved; nor is what she did to be made an example for imitation.

3. Jacob also had, no doubt, sufficient evidence that the birthright was conveyed unto him; yet although he followed his mother's instructions, and obeyed her commands in what he did, his miscarriages in getting the conveyance of it by his father's blessing, which were not a few, are not to be excused.

But under all these mistakes and miscarriages we may observe two things:—

1. That true faith acted itself in all the persons concerned. The faith of Isaac was true and right in this, that the promise was sure to his seed by virtue of the covenant, and that he was instrumentally, in the way of external evidence, to convey it by his solemn benediction. The first was express in the covenant: the other he had by immediate revelation and inspiration; for his blessing was a "prophecy of things to come," as it is in the text. But he missed it in the application of it unto the object in his own intention, though in matter of fact, by the divine disposal of circumstances, he was in the right. This mistake hindered not but that he blessed Jacob in faith.

One expositor, who abounds in conjectures, and is as unhappy in them as any man well can be, would have it that the blessing of Jacob in faith doth not belong, or is not to be ascribed unto that solemn blessing which he pronounced upon him when he mistook the person, supposing him to be Esau, Gen. 27:27–29, but unto what he said afterwards concerning him unto Esau, verse 33, "I have blessed him, and he shall be blessed;" than which nothing can be more remote from the mind of the Holy Ghost. For in these words to Esau he directly affirms that he had blessed him, and now only declares the consequent of it, namely, that he should enjoy the blessing,—"He shall be blessed." Now this hath respect unto that former blessing; which was therefore in faith, notwithstanding the previous mistake of the person, which he now understood, by what he had done, as being under the immediate conduct of the Spirit of God.

So did true faith act itself both in Rebekah and Jacob, and they were in the right, from divine revelation, that the promises did belong to Jacob. Howbeit they variously miscarried in the way they took for obtaining a pledge of it in the paternal benediction.

Wherefore it cannot be denied but that sometimes, when true faith is rightly fixed on divine promises, those in whom it is, and who truly believe, may, through darkness, infirmities, and temptations, put themselves on irregular ways for the accomplishment of them. And as in these ways they may fail and miscarry, unto the scandal of religion and a dangerous concussion of their own faith; so if they do succeed in such ways, as Jacob did, yet are not their ways accepted or approved of God, as they will quickly understand. But although these mistakes may be such as to vitiate their works, and render them unacceptable unto God, yet shall they not condemn their persons in the sight of God, neither here nor hereafter.

Whereas, therefore, there yet remain many promises to be accomplished concerning the church, and its state or condition in this world; as it is our duty firmly to believe them, so it is our wisdom, not, upon any temptations, provocations, or advantages, to attempt their accomplishment in any unwarrantable way and undertaking.

2. We may see herein the infinite purity of the divine will, effectually accomplishing its own purposes and designs through the failings and miscarriages of men, without the least mixture with or approbation of their iniquities or miscarriages. So did God accomplish his purpose and promise unto Jacob, by ordering the outward circumstances of the irregular actings of him and his mother unto his own blessed ends. And although he neither commanded nor approved of these irregularities in them, yet whereas there was true faith in the persons themselves, though misguided as unto some outward actions; and that acted, as they judged, in compliance with his will, without the least design of injury unto any others (for they aimed at nothing but what was their own by his grant and donation); he accepted their persons, pardoned their sins, and effected the matter according to their desire.

And we may yet observe,—

Obs. That the failure, error, or mistake of any one leading person, with respect unto divine promises and their accomplishment, may be of dangerous consequence unto others;—as here the failing of Isaac was the occasion of casting Jacob and Rebekah into all their irregularities.

These things being premised, as unto the story which respect is here had unto, the words themselves may be briefly opened. And there are three things in them: 1. What is ascribed unto Isaac; namely, that "he blessed his sons." 2. How he did it; and that was, "by faith." 3. What was the subject-matter of his blessing; and that was, "things to come."

Εὐλόγησε. 1. He blessed them. Those patriarchal blessings were partly euctical, or prayers; partly prophetical, or predictions. And the matter of them was the promise made unto them, with what was contained in them, and nothing else. They did not pray for, they could not foretell, any thing but what God had promised. They were authoritative applications of God's promises unto the persons unto whom they did belong, for the confirmation of their faith.

So far as they were merely euctical, or consisted in solemn prayer, they were an effect and duty of the ordinary parental ministry, and as such ought to be used by all parents. Not as some, by the trifling custom of daily asking and

giving blessing, whilst perhaps a curse is entailed on families by wretched examples; but by solemn reiterated prayer unto that purpose. But there were two things extraordinary in them: (1.) A certain determination of the promise unto particular persons, as was here done by Isaac; which falls not within the compass of the ordinary paternal ministry. We may fail in our most earnest desires and sincere endeavours for the communication of the promise unto this or that child. (2.) Prediction of particular future events, falling within the compass and verge of the promise. So was it in the solemn blessings of Isaac, Jacob, and Moses. Herein were they acted by a spirit of prophecy and immediate revelation.

Πίστει. 2. Thus he blessed his sons; and he did it "by faith." But yet there is a difficulty that ariseth on both hands, from the one blessing and the other. For the blessing of Jacob was from immediate inspiration, and not intended by Isaac to be applied unto Jacob; both which considerations seem to exclude his faith from any interest in this benediction. And the blessing of Esau related only unto temporal things, and that not with respect unto any especial promise.

I answer, That as unto the first, or the blessing of Jacob, (1.) There was a proper object of his faith, which it was fixed on, namely, the promise of the covenant, that God would be a God to him and his seed, and that in his seed all the nations of the earth should be blessed. Herein was his faith exercised in his blessing of Jacob; which was no way impeded by his mistake of the person. Faith was acted by the promise, and was guided as to its object by God's providence. (2.) Immediate inspiration doth no way hinder the actings of faith on preceding revelations. He had the warrant of the word of God before revealed for the ground of his faith, and his immediate inspiration guided him to act according unto it. And, (3.) As for the blessing of Esau, although it respected only temporal things, yet he gave it him in faith also, in that it was the fruit of his prayer for him, and contained predictions which he had received by divine revelation.

Περὶ μελλόντων. 3. The subject-matter of both these blessings were things to come; that is, things that were not yet, nor yet to have their present accomplishment. For that part of the blessing of Jacob, that he should be lord of his brethren, as it is expressed in the blessing of Esau, "Thou shalt serve thy brother," was not fulfilled in their days, there being a great appearance of the contrary. Wherefore the things contained in these blessings, absolutely considered, were future, and yet for to come, in the days of, and among their posterity.

Now, the blessing of Jacob did not contain only a better portion in this world than that of Esau, as Grotius would have it; nor had there been any need of so great a contest about the difference between the land of Canaan and that of Edom, but as it did comprise also the numerous posterity of Jacob, their quiet habitation, power and dominion in the land of Canaan: so the principal subject of it was the enclosure of the church, the confinement of the covenant, and the enjoyment of the promise of the blessed Seed unto him and his offspring. And it was the contempt hereof, and not of a double portion of earthly things, for which Esau is stigmatized as a "profane person."

Hebrews 11: 21

Πίστει Ἰακὼβ ἀποθνήσκων ἕκαστον τῶν υἱῶν Ἰωσὴφ εὐλόγησε, καὶ προσεκύνησεν ἐπὶ τὸ ἄκρον τῆς ῥάβδου αὐτοῦ.

Ἀποθνήσκων, "moriens," "moriturus," "cum moreretur;" "when he drew nigh to death,"—the present tense; that which was then in the next disposition unto the actual death that shortly ensued; probably a few days before his death.

Ἕκαστον, "singulos filiorum," for ἑκάτερον or ἀμφω, "each" or "both." "Utrumque." Syr., לְכַל חַד, "every one." "Both the sons of Joseph" distinctly.

Ἐπὶ τὸ ἄκρον τῆς ῥάβδου αὐτοῦ. Vulg. Lat., "et adoravit fastigium virgae ejus," "he adored the top of his rod." Leaving out the preposition ἐπί, "on," it corrupts the sense, and forceth the meaning of the words to be, of Joseph's rod; whence a vain and foolish opinion hath been fancied about adoring or worshipping of creatures,—as remote from the sense of this place as from truth. The Syriac properly, וסְגֵד עַל רֵישׁ חוּטְרֵהּ, "he bowed" (or "adored") "on the top of his own staff." Beza supplies "innixus," which we render "leaning."

Ver. 21.—By faith Jacob, when he was dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph, [each of them,] and worshipped, [leaning] on the top of his staff.

There are two things mentioned in the words: 1. That "Jacob blessed the sons of Joseph." 2. That he "worshipped, leaning on the top of his staff." But they did not fall out in the order wherein they are here expressed. The latter of them is recorded before the former, Gen. 47:31, "And Israel bowed himself upon the bed's head." To which is added, that after these things Joseph brought his children unto him, chap. 48:1.

Ἀποθνήσκων. From chap. 47:29 unto the end of the Book of Genesis, an account is given us of the dying of Jacob, and what he did in order thereunto,—as the apostle expresseth it, "when he was dying." What space of time, or how

many days it took up, is uncertain; probably not many. The first thing he did in order hereunto, was to send for his son Joseph, to give him charge concerning his burial in the land of Canaan; which was an act and duty of faith with respect unto the promise, verses 29–31. This being done, it is said that "Israel bowed himself upon the bed's head;" that is, he bowed himself, and worshipped God. This is but once mentioned in the whole story; but an intimation is given therein of what Jacob did on the like occasions, especially in all the passages of his dying acts and words. When he had spoken or done any thing, his way was to retire immediately unto God with acknowledgment of his mercy, and requests of more grace.

And such, indeed, is the frame and carriage of holy men in their dying seasons. For as they have occasion to attend unto other things sometimes, so on all advantages they bow down their souls and bodies so far as they are able, in acts of faith, prayer, and thankfulness.

Ἰακώβ. First, The person here whose faith is instanced in is Jacob; but there is some difficulty in the choice of the particular act or duty which the apostle chooseth to give instance in. For Jacob, as he abounded in trials and temptations above all the other patriarchs, so he gave sundry illustrious testimonies of his faith, seeming to be of greater evidence than this of blessing the sons of Joseph. Especially, that was so which is recorded by the Holy Spirit in Hos. 12:3, 4, "By his strength he had power with God: yea, he had power over the Angel, and prevailed: he wept, and made supplication unto him: he found him in Beth-el, and there he spake with us." In comparison hereof this act of blessing the sons of Joseph is of an inferior consideration.

This is the only difficulty of this place; which yet by expositors is taken no notice of. But if we look into the thing itself, we shall find that it was divine wisdom in the apostle whereby he fixed on this instance of the faith of Jacob. For in his blessing of the sons of Joseph, the good man being near to death, he makes a recapitulation of all the principal concernments of his life, as it was a life of faith; and we shall therefore consider some of those circumstances, which manifest how proper this instance was unto the purpose of the apostle.

1. It was the exercise of his faith in his old age; and not only so, but then when he had a certain prospect of the sudden approach of his death, Gen. 47:29, 48:21. We have therefore herein a testimony, that notwithstanding all the trials

and conflicts which he had met withal, with the weaknesses and disconsolations of old age, he abode firm in faith, and vigorous in the exercise of it. His natural decay did not cause any abatement in his spiritual strength.

2. In this blessing of Joseph and his sons he did solemnly recognise, plead, and assert the covenant made with Abraham: "God, before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac did walk," Gen. 48:15; that is, with whom God made the everlasting covenant, and who walked therein before him all their days. This is the life of faith, namely, to lay hold on the covenant; which he did herein expressly.

3. As he made a solemn acknowledgment of all spiritual mercies by virtue of the covenant, so he added thereunto that of all temporal mercies also: "The God which fed me all my life long unto this day." It was a work of faith, to retain a precious, thankful remembrance of divine providence, in a constant provision of all needful temporal supplies, from first to last, during the whole course of his life.

4. He reflects on all the hazards, trials, and evils that befell him, and the exercise of his faith in them all: "Redeemed me from all evil." Now all his dangers are past, all his evils conquered, all his fears removed, he retains by faith a sense of the goodness and kindness of God in rescuing him out of them all.

5. In particular, he remembers the acting of his faith in the matter recorded by Hosea, before mentioned, and therein of his faith in the Son of God in an especial manner, as he was the Angel of the covenant, the Angel the Redeemer: "The Angel," saith he, "that redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads." That by this Angel, the person of the Son of God, as he was to be the Messenger of the covenant, and the Redeemer of the church, is intended, I have proved elsewhere, and it was the sense of all the ancient writers of the church; however, some of the Roman church would abuse this testimony to give countenance unto the invocation of angels,—which is little less than blasphemy. Wherefore, in the recognition hereof did faith most eminently act itself.

6. The discerning of the sons of Joseph one from the other when he was blind; the disposal of his hands, his right hand unto the head of Ephraim, and his left unto the head of Manasseh, contrary to the desire of their father; and the proposal of them unto him; with the prediction of their future condition many ages after; were all evidences of the especial presence of God with him, and consequently of his own faith in God.

7. There were other circumstances also that rendered this benediction of Jacob an eminent act of faith: as, (1.) That he laid the foundation of it in an especial revelation, Gen. 48:3: "And Jacob said unto Joseph, God Almighty" (God in covenant with me) "appeared unto me at Luz in the land of Canaan, and blessed me," etc. (2.) That he did solemnly, by divine warrant, adopt Ephraim and Manasseh to be his children; whereby they became to have the interest of distinct tribes in Israel, verse 5. And hereby (3.) He gave the right of the birthright, as unto a double portion, forfeited by Reuben, unto Joseph. (4.) He remembers the kindness of God in this, that whereas his beloved wife Rachel died immaturely of her second son, verse 7, yet God would give him a numerous posterity by her,—the thing which both he and she so greatly desired.

On all these considerations, it is evident that the apostle for great and weighty reasons fixed on this instance of faith in Jacob, that he "blessed both the sons of Joseph." And we may see, that,—

Obs. I. It is an eminent mercy, when faith not only holds out unto the end, but waxeth strong towards the last conflict with death; as it was with Jacob.

Obs. II. It is so also, to be able by faith, in the close of our pilgrimage, to recapitulate all the passages of our lives, in mercies, trials, afflictions, so as to give glory to God with respect unto them all; as Jacob did in this place.

Obs. III. That which enlivens and encourageth faith as unto all other things, is a peculiar respect unto the Angel the Redeemer, by whom all grace and mercy are communicated unto us.

Obs. IV. It is our duty so to live in the constant exercise of faith, as that we may be ready and strong in it when we are dying.

Obs. V. Though we should die daily, yet there is a peculiar dying season, when death is in its near approach, which requires peculiar actings of faith.

Secondly, The latter clause of the words, or the other instance of the faith of Jacob, that "he worshipped, leaning on the top of his staff," hath a peculiar difficulty in it, from a difference between the words of the apostle and those of Moses concerning the same thing. The words in Moses are, וַיִּשְׁתַּחוּ יִשְׂרָאֵל עַל־ רֹאשׁ הַמִּטָּה; that is, "And Israel bowed himself upon the bed's head." This the Septuagint renders by, Καὶ προσεκύνησεν Ἰσραὴλ ἐπὶ τὸ ἄκρον τῆς ῥάβδου αὐτοῦ, —"And Israel worshipped on the top of his rod." The Vulgar Latin in that place followeth the original, "Adoravit Israel Deum conversus ad lectuli caput;"—"And Israel worshipped God, turning to the head of the bed." The

apostle in this place makes use of the words as they are in the translation of the LXX.; and the difficulty is increased by the Vulgar translation in this place, which leaving out the preposition ἐπί, renders the words, "And he adored the top of his staff," or "rod;" that is, say some, the sceptre of Joseph. This verbal difference is sufficiently belaboured by critical expositors of all sorts: I shall give a brief account of my thoughts concerning it.

1. The words of Moses are the close of the 47th chapter of Genesis, "And Israel bowed himself upon the head of the bed." Whereas this may denote only a natural action of the old man, who having sat up to confer with his son Joseph, being infirm and weary, when he had finished his discourse, and taken the oath of his son, he "bowed himself unto the head of the bed." But the Vulgar Latin hath well supplied, "God,"—he "adored God towards the bed's head;" that is, by bowing down unto him. And so הִשְׁתַּ חֲוָה is most frequently used to express an act of divine adoration; and that it was such is here declared by the apostle.

2. That Jacob worshipped the top of Joseph's staff or sceptre, which he carried as an ensign of his authority and power, is rejected by all sober expositors. It hath, indeed, a double countenance given unto it in the Vulgar translation: (1.) By the omission of the preposition ἐπί, "on" or "upon," which must include 'leaning on,' or some word of the same importance; and, (2.) By rendering αὐτοῦ by "ejus," and referring it to Joseph; whereas it is often used for ἑαυτοῦ, or reciprocally, "his own;" which must be here supposed, or it answers not the original. And as for any worship of Jacob performed unto Joseph, it is most remote from the text. For not only at that instant had Joseph put his hand under his father's thigh, and sworn unto him, wherein he acknowledged his superiority, but also a little after "he bowed himself" unto him "with his face to the earth," Gen. 48:12.

3. The apostle doth not in this epistle tie himself unto the express words of the original text in his allegations out of the Old Testament, but only gives the certain sense and meaning of the Holy Ghost in them.

4. The word in the original is מִטָּה, which may have a different pronunciation by a different supply of vowels; and so a different signification. If we read it "mittah," it signifies a "bed," as we render it in Genesis; if we read it "matteh," it signifies a "staff" or a "rod," on which a man may lean; both from the same verb, נָטָה, to "extend," to "incline." And hence doth the difference arise. And we may observe concerning it,—

(1.) It is certain that in the days of Jerome the Hebrew reading was unquestionably "mittah," a "bed," as it is now; for he blames the LXX. for misinterpreting the word. Quaest. Hebr.

(2.) Hereon some say, that the translation of the LXX. being in common use among the Jews in all their dispersions, and even in Judea itself, the apostle freely followed it, in compliance with them, there being nothing in it discrepant from the truth as to the substance of it. What is my judgment of this conjecture, I have elsewhere declared.

(3.) Others say, the apostle makes use of this variety in expression to represent the entire posture and action of Jacob in this adoration. For whereas he was very weak and infirm, being near the time of his death, (which is observed in the story,) upon the coming of Joseph to him he sat upon the side of his bed, with his staff in his hand; a posture which he may be easily conceived to be in. At the end of his discourse with him, addressing himself unto the solemn adoration of God, he so bowed towards the bed's head as that he supported himself with his staff, to preserve himself in a posture of reverence for his divine meditation. Wherefore,—

(4.) Although I will not contend that the word in that place hath a double signification, of a "bed" and a "staff," yet this is the true solution of this difficulty. The apostle did not design a precise translation of the words of Moses, but intended only to express the same thing. And whereas that was undoubtedly the posture of Jacob in the worshipping of God which we have declared, the apostle useth his liberty in expressing it by his "leaning on his staff." For that he did both, namely, "bow towards the head of the bed," and at the same time "lean on his staff," we are assured by comparing the divine writers together.

(5.) There is an expression like unto it concerning David, 1 Kings 1:47, וַיִּשְׁתַּחוּ הַמֶּלֶךְ עַל־הַמִּשְׁכָּב,—"And the king bowed himself on his bed;" that is, he bowed down towards the bed's head in his great weakness, so to adore and worship God. And Jacob's leaning on his staff therewithal, completes the emblem and representation of his reverence and faith: by the one he bowed down, by the other he sustained himself; as whatever doth sustain and support is in the Scripture called a staff. And we may observe, that,—

Obs. VI. In all acts of divine worship, whether stated or occasional, it is our duty to dispose our bodies into such a posture of reverence as may represent the inward frame of our minds.—So did Jacob here, and it is reckoned as an act and duty of faith.

Obs. VII. There is an allowance for the infirmities of age and sickness, in our outward deportment in divine worship, so as that there be no indulgence unto sloth or custom, but that an evidence of a due reverence of God and holy things be preserved.—Those postures which are commended in Jacob, would not, it may be, become others in their health and strength. So David affirms, that he would rise at midnight out of his bed, to give thanks unto God, Ps. 119:62.

Hebrews 11: 22

Πίστει Ἰωσὴφ τελευτῶν περὶ τῆς ἐξόδου τῶν υἱῶν Ἰσραὴλ ἐμνημόνευσε, καὶ τερὶ τῶν ὀστέων αὐτοῦ ἐνετείλατο.

Ver. 22.—By faith Joseph, when he died, made mention of the departing of the children of Israel; and gave commandment concerning his bones.

Two instances are here proposed of the faith of Joseph: 1. That "he made mention of the departing of the children of Israel" out of Egypt. 2. That he "gave command concerning his bones." The account hereof is given in the close of the book of Genesis.

1. The first instance proposed of Joseph's faith, is his "making mention of the departing of the children of Israel" out of Egypt. And for the exposition of the place, we may consider,—

(1.) To whom he spake these words, and gave this charge. The words he spake unto his brethren: "Joseph said unto his brethren," Gen. 50:24. Some of his own brethren were yet alive, as is evident concerning Levi. For Joseph when he died was but an hundred and ten years old, verse 26; and Levi lived an hundred and seven and thirty years, being not twenty years older than Joseph. And probably God might shorten the life of Joseph to make way for the affliction of the people which he had foretold, and which immediately ensued thereon. Also, under the name of his "brethren," his brothers' sons may be intended, as is usual.

But as unto the command concerning his bones, the expression is changed. For it is said that "he took an oath of the children of Israel;" and so it is again repeated, Exod. 13:19, "he had straitly sworn the children of Israel;"—that is, he brought the whole people into this engagement by the heads of their tribes, that they might be obliged in after generations; for he foresaw that it would not be the work of them who were then living.

Τελευτῶν. (2.) The time wherein these things were done; it was when he was dying: "And Joseph said unto his brethren, I die." This evidence he gave of the steadfastness of his faith, that it had accompanied him through all his

afflictions, and all his prosperity, not forsaking him now at his death. He had lived long in glory, power, and wealth; but through all he preserved his faith in the promise of God entire. And if there had been nothing in that promise but the inheritance of the land of Canaan, as some imagine, he would not have maintained his faith concerning it unto the death, and in his departure out of the world, enjoying far more in Egypt than what was contained therein. But,—

Obs. I. It is of great use unto the edification of the church, that such believers as have been eminent in profession, should at their dying testify their faith in the promises of God. So did Jacob, so did Joseph; and others have done so, to the great advantage of them concerned.

(3.) In the way whereby he expressed his faith we may observe, [1.] The object of it, or what it was which he believed, namely, "the departure of the children of Israel" out of Egypt; [2.] The manner of his acting that faith, he "made mention" of what he did believe.

Περὶ τῆς ἐξόδου. [1.] This departure of the children of Israel is not intended absolutely, as a mere departing thence; but such as whereby the promise made unto their fathers should be accomplished. For so it is declared in the story, "God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land, unto the land which he sware to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob," Gen. 50:24. The accomplishment of this promise was that which was the especial object of his faith, whereof this departure was a means subservient thereunto. And he seems to have respect unto the promise made unto Abraham, Gen. 15:13, 14; wherein the sojourning and affliction of his seed in a strange land was determined before their admission into the land of Canaan.

Obs. II. After his trial of all that this world could afford, when he was dying he chose the promise for his lot and portion.

[2.] The manner of the acting of his faith towards this object is, that he "made mention of it." And we may consider in it,—

1st. How he did it. And that was in the way of public profession. He called his brethren unto him, and spake of it unto them all, Gen. 50:24. And he did it, as to discharge his own duty, (for "with the mouth confession is made unto salvation,") so to strengthen their faith. For when they found that he, in all his glory and wealth, yet embraced the promise, and died in the faith of it, it was a great encouragement and provocation unto them, who were in a meaner condition, firmly to cleave unto the same promise. And when men who are

great, mighty, and wealthy in the world, do in their public profession prefer the promises of the gospel before and above their present enjoyments, it is of great use in the church.

Ἐμνημόνευσε. 2dly. He "made mention of it," or called it to remembrance. It was not that which he had by immediate present revelation; but it was from his reliance on the promises long before given. And these were two: (1st.) The great promise made unto Abraham, that God would give the land of Canaan to his seed for a possession, Gen. 15:7; and, (2dly.) That they should be delivered out of great bondage and distress before they entered into it, verses 13, 14. His faith in these promises he here makes profession of.

3dly. He foresaw the oppression and bondage that they were to undergo, before the accomplishment of this promise. For so he expresseth himself unto his brethren, "God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land," Gen. 50:24. And again, "God will surely visit you," verse 25. He hath respect unto the words of God to Abraham, Gen. 15:13, 14, "Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years: and also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge; and afterward shall they come out with great substance." This he believed and foresaw, and therefore makes mention of God's "visiting them;" that is, having respect unto them in their distresses, and providing for their deliverance.

4thly. The prospect of their bondage, and their helpless condition therein, did not at all weaken his faith as unto the accomplishment of the promise. Wherefore, when the apostle says that "he made mention of the departing of the children of Israel," (that is, from Egypt,) he had not only respect unto the thing itself, but also unto the manner and circumstances of it; namely, that it should be after great oppression, and by a work of almighty power.

5thly. This was a proper season for Joseph to make mention of the promise and its accomplishment; as it is the wisdom of faith to call the promises to remembrance in the seasons that they are suited unto. He was now dying, and upon his death, his brethren, the posterity of Jacob, knew not what would become of them, nor what would be their condition, being deprived of him who was their only protector. At this season, to testify his own faith in the promise, now he had no more concernment in this world, and to encourage them unto the like confidence in it, he makes mention of its accomplishment. And we see,—

Obs. III. That no interposition of difficulties ought to weaken our faith as unto the accomplishment of the promises of God.

Ἐνετείλατο. 2. There is a particular instance of the faith of Joseph, in that "he gave commandment concerning his bones." And this was peculiar unto himself alone. That which the apostle expresseth by his commanding, or giving commandment, was his taking an oath of his brethren, and their posterity in them, Gen. 50:25. He straitly charged the children of Israel with an oath, Exod. 13:19. As it was an act of authority in him, (for he had the rule of his brethren,) it was a command; the manner of the obligation unto the performance of it was by an oath. So Abraham gave charge and command to Eliezer his servant about taking a wife for Isaac, with an oath, Gen. 24:2, 3, 9. And these kinds of oaths, in things lawful, for a good end, not arbitrarily imposed, but entered into by consent, are good in themselves, and in some cases necessary.

The apostle saith only, that "he gave commandment concerning his bones," and doth not declare what it was that he gave in charge concerning them. But this is expressed in the story, namely, that when God visited them, and delivered them out of Egypt, they should carry his bones along with them into Canaan, Gen. 50:25. In order hereunto, "they embalmed him, and put him in a coffin in Egypt," verse 26. Probably the Egyptians left the care of his funeral unto his brethren, and his coffin remained in the custody of their posterity, perhaps his own in particular, until the time of their departure. Then Moses took them into his care, Exod. 13:19. And the issue of the whole was, that into the land of Canaan they were safely carried, according to the oath of the people, and were buried in Shechem, in a parcel of ground whereof Jacob had made a purchase, and left it in legacy unto the children of Joseph, Josh. 24:32.

Thus was it as unto the story; but an inquiry may be made into the reasons why Joseph gave this charge concerning his bones unto his brethren, whereas all their bones rested in Egypt, were not translated into Canaan, nor did they take any care that they should be so. But there were some things peculiar unto Joseph, which caused his faith to act in this way about the disposal of his bones. For,—

(1.) He had been of great power, authority, and dignity among the Egyptians. His fame and reputation, for wisdom, righteousness, and law-making, were great among the nations. He might therefore justly have feared, that if he had not thus openly renounced all cognation and alliance with them, he might

among posterity have been esteemed an Egyptian; which he abhorred. Therefore he established this lasting monument of his being of the seed and posterity of Abraham, and not an Egyptian.

(2.) As it is supposed that God buried the body of Moses where it should not be known by any, lest the people, prone to superstition and idolatry, should have worshipped it, as they did afterwards the brazen serpent; so had the bones of Joseph been continued in Egypt, they might have been turned into an idol by that foolish people, which hereby was prevented. Yea, it is generally thought that in after ages they did worship him under the name of Serapis, and the symbol of an ox. But this, what lay in him, he prevented by the removal of his bones.

(3.) He did it plainly to encourage the faith and expectation of his brethren and their posterity as unto the certainty of their future deliverance; as also to take them off from all designing to fix or plant themselves in Egypt, seeing he, who had all advantages above them for that end, would not have so much as his bones to abide in the land.

(4.) He might also have respect herein unto the kindness of his father, who gave him a peculiar lot of inheritance in the land of Canaan, wherein, out of a remembrance of his faith in God and love unto him, he would be buried.

However it be, it is most evident that this holy man lived and died in faith, being enabled thereby to prefer the promise of God above all earthly enjoyments. The frame of his spirit now he was dying is a sufficient indication of what it was in the whole course of his life. He is not solicitous about the disposal of his wealth and revenues, which no doubt were very great; but his mind is wholly on the promise, and thereby on the covenant with Abraham. It is highly probable that he had converted his wife, Asenath, a woman of a princely family, from idolatry, unto the knowledge of God and faith in him. Hereon, as is likely, she also was contented that her children and posterity should fall from their parental honour and revenues, to take up their portion among the afflicted people of God. The mighty working of his faith shines out in all these things.

And if a voluntary relinquishment of all earthly enjoyments, by preferring the promises of God before and above them all, be no less glorious and acceptable in the sight of God, a no less eminent effect of faith, than patiently

to undergo the loss of them by the power of persecuting enemies; then is this instance of the apostle eminently suited unto the argument which he hath in hand.

The plea of some of the Roman church from this place, for the preservation and veneration of relics, or the bones of saints departed, is weak unto the utmost contempt. For besides that this charge of Joseph concerning his bones and their disposal was singular, such a fruit of faith as could have no place in any other person, nor ever can there be the like occasion in the world, all that was done in compliance with that charge, was but the carrying of them shut up in a coffin into the land of Canaan, and there decently burying of them. To take an example from hence of digging men's bones out of their graves, of enshrining and placing them on altars, of carrying them up and down in procession, of adoring them with all signs of religious veneration, applying them unto miraculous operations, in curing diseases, casting out of devils, and the like, is fond and ridiculous.

Hebrews 11: 23

In searching the sacred records for eminent examples of the power and efficacy of faith, the apostle is arrived unto that of Moses. And because this is the greatest instance, next to that of Abraham, he insists on sundry acts and fruits thereof. And indeed, if we consider aright his person and his circumstances; the work which he was called unto; the trials, difficulties, and temptations he had to conflict withal; the concernment of the glory of God and of the whole church in him; the illustrious representation of the redemption and deliverance of the church by Christ in what he did; with his success and victory over all opposition; —we must acknowledge that there cannot be a more excellent exemplification of the power of faith than what was given in him. For this cause the apostle takes one step backward, to declare the faith of his parents in his preservation in his infancy, whereon his future life and all that he was called unto did depend. For ofttimes, when God designeth persons to a great work, he giveth some previous indication of it, in or about their nativity: not by a fictitious horoscope, or the position and aspect of planets, a thing common to all born at the same time unto the most different events; but by some peculiar work and divine warning of his own. So was it in the birth of Samson, of Samuel, John the Baptist, and others. And so was it in the birth and preservation of this Moses, as it is declared in this verse.

Ver. 23.—Πίστει Μωϋσῆς γεννηθεὶς ἐκρύβη τρίμηνον ὑπὸ τῶν πατέρων αὐτοῦ, διότι εἶδον ἀστεῖον τὸ παιδίον, καὶ οὐκ ἐφοβήθησαν τὸ διάταγμα τοῦ βασιλέως.

Ver. 23.—By faith Moses, when he was born, was hid three months of his parents, because they saw [he was] a proper child; and they were not afraid of the king's commandment.

It is the faith of the parents of Moses that is here celebrated. But because it is mentioned principally to introduce the discourse of himself and his faith, and also that what is spoken belongs unto his honour, it is thus peculiarly expressed. He saith not, 'By faith the parents of Moses, when he was born, hid him;' but, "By faith Moses, when he was born, was hid;" that is, by the faith of his parents, who hid him.

This birth of Moses fell out in the very height and fury of the persecution. After that Pharaoh failed in his design of destroying the male children of the Hebrews by the midwives, he gave the execution of it in charge unto all the people,—that is, the officers among them; who no doubt were sufficiently diligent and officious in the work committed unto them. About the very entrance of this new, effectual way of the destruction of the male children,—when their rage was most fierce, no way abated by compassion, nor wearied by long continuance, nor weakened by any conviction of want of success, which use to abate the edge of persecution,—in the wise disposal of divine Providence, Moses is born and preserved, who was to be the deliverer of the whole people out of all their misery.

How blind are poor, sinful mortals, in all their contrivances against the church of God! When they think all things secure, and that they shall not fail of their end; that their counsels are laid so deep as not to be blown up; their power so uncontrollable, and the way wherein they are engaged so effectual, as that God himself can hardly deliver it out of their hands;—He that sits on high laughs them to scorn, and with an almighty facility lays in provision for the deliverance of his church, and their utter ruin.

Josephus, giving an account of the nativity of Moses, tells us that Amram his father had a revelation from God, or a divine oracle, that of him and his wife Jochebed he should proceed and be born by whom the people should be delivered out of bondage. And that hereon, seeing the eminent beauty of this child when it was born, he and his wife used the utmost of their industry, with the venture of their lives, for his preservation; for they firmly believed that the divine oracle should be accomplished. And because it is said that they hid him

by faith, some expositors do judge that in their faith they had respect unto some immediate divine revelation. But we shall see that they had a sufficient ground of faith for what they did without any such immediate revelation, which is not necessary unto the exercise of faith on all occasions. And as for Josephus, it is manifest that in the account he gives of the life of Moses, before his flight out of Egypt, he records many things without sufficient warrant, and some of them inconsistent with the Scripture.

There are five things to be considered in the exposition of the words: 1. Who they were whose faith is here commended; the parents of Moses. 2. Wherein they acted and manifested their faith; they "hid him three months." 3. What was their motive hereunto; "they saw he was a proper child." 4. How they did this; "by faith." 5. What was the power of that faith enabling them unto this duty; "they were not afraid of the king's commandment."

Ὑπὸ τῶν πατέρων αὐτοῦ. 1. The persons intended were the parents of Moses. Πατέρες, "fathers," is sometimes used in the common gender for γονεῖς, "parents," as it is here. In the story there is mention only of his mother, Exod. 2:2. And that was, because the execution of the counsel or advice was committed unto her; wherein she used also the help of her daughter, as verse 4. But it is plain in this place, that his father was no less engaged in this work and duty than his mother. He was in the advice and counsel, as also in the hazard of what was done, no less than she. And this had an influence into the success. For,—

Obs. I. Where there is an agreement between husband and wife, in faith and the fear of the Lord, it makes way unto a blessed success in all their duties: when it is otherwise, nothing succeeds unto their comfort. And,—

Obs. II. When difficult duties befall persons in that relation, it is their wisdom each to apply themselves unto that part and share of it which they are best suited for.—So was it in this case; Amram no doubt was the principal in the advice and contrivance, as his wife was in its actual execution.

Ἐκρύβη τρίμηνον. 2. They hid him three months: He was "hid by them three months." Herein they acted and exercised their faith. And this they seem to have done two ways: (1.) They concealed his birth as much as they were able, and did not let it be known that a male child was born in the family. (2.) They kept him not in the usual place where children were disposed of, but hid him in some secret part of the house. Here he abode three months; about the end of

which time probably the report began to grow that there was a male child born there; which would have occasioned an immediate strict search and scrutiny, from which they could not have preserved him. And,—

Obs. III. This is the height of persecution, when private houses are searched by bloody officers, to execute tyrannical laws;—when the last and utmost retreat of innocency, for that protection which is due unto it by the law of God and nature, with the common rules of human society, cannot be a shelter against wicked rage and fury.

No doubt but during this season their diligence was accompanied with fervent cries unto God, and the exercise of trust in him. The occasion was great on all hands, and they were not wanting unto any part of their duty. The outward act of hiding the child was but an indication of the internal working of their faith.

Διότι. 3. That which was their motive and encouragement to the exercise of their faith in this way of hiding the child, is, "Because they saw he was a proper child." Διότι, some render "quia" or "quoniam," some "quum;" "because they saw," or "when," or "whereas they saw." It doth not include the whole cause of what they did, as though this were the only reason or ground whereon they did it; but it respects that impression on their minds which the sight of the child gave unto them, exciting them unto that duty which they had other grounds and reasons for, as we shall see immediately. It is granted, therefore, that the sight of the child (whose countenance was twice instrumental in the saving of its life, first by the smiles of its beauty, and then by its weeping, Exod. 2:2, 6) did greatly excite their natural affections, by which their minds were made the more ready to engage in the hazard which faith called them unto for his preservation.

Ἀστεῖον τὸ παιδίον. They "saw that he was a proper child." Heb., כִּי־טוֹב הוּא. "Tob," in the Hebrew, is applied to every thing that is on any account approvable and excellent in its kind. The word it is whereby God approved of all his works of creation, and declared their perfection, Gen. 1:31. And it is applied in particular unto beauty of countenance: Gen. 24:16, Rebekah was טֹבַת מַרְאֶה, "good of countenance." It is in this place rendered by the LXX. ἀστεῖος,—that is, "elegans, venustus, festivus, scitus, bellus, pulcher." We render it here "proper," "a proper child;" whether properly or no, the use of our language and custom in speaking must determine. The word signifies "comely, beautiful, goodly;" ἀγαθός, καλός. Holy Stephen expresseth the force of the Hebrew word by ἀστεῖος

τῷ Θεῷ, "fair to God," or in the sight of God, Acts 7:20; which we render "exceeding fair." No doubt but an unusual natural elegancy, sweetness, and beauty of countenance are intended. And not only so, but I am persuaded, from that expression of Stephen, that there was θεῖον τι, an appearance of somewhat divine and supernatural, which drew the thoughts and minds of the parents unto a deep consideration of the child. They quickly thought it was not for nothing that God had given such a peculiarly gracious, promising countenance unto the infant. This not only drew their affections, and engaged them, but moved their minds and judgments to endeavour all lawful ways for its preservation. And,—

Obs. IV. It is well when any thing of eminency in our children doth so engage our affections unto them, as to make them useful and subservient unto diligence in disposing of them unto the glory of God. Otherwise a fondness in parents, arising from the natural endowments of children, is usually hurtful, and oftentimes ruinous unto the one and other.

Πίστει. 4. The principle of their actings for his preservation, in hiding of him, as also in the means afterwards used, was their "faith." But how and on what grounds they acted faith herein, must be inquired into. And,—

(1.) I take it for granted that they had no especial, particular revelation concerning the life and work of this child. None such is mentioned, no such was needful for the acting of faith in this matter; and the manner of their deportment in the whole manifests that no such they had.

(2.) They had a firm faith of the deliverance of the people out of bondage in the appointed season. This they had an express promise for, and were newly engaged in the belief of it by the witness given unto it by Joseph, and his charge on them to carry his bones with them. And with respect hereunto it is that they are said in the close of the verse not to fear the king's command, which is the effect of their faith; which may now be spoken unto.

Οὐκ ἐφοβήθησαν τὸ διάταγμα τοῦ βασιλέως. It was a διάταγμα, "an ordinance, a statute, an edict," which had the force of a standing law; and that established by the king, with the counsel of the kingdom, as is declared, Exod. 1:9–11. And this law lay directly against the accomplishment of the promise; for it aimed at the extirpation of the whole race, so as that there should have remained none to be delivered. As the historian says of that company of men who founded Rome, "Res unius aetatis respublica virorum,"—"A commonwealth of men only, without women, would have been but the matter of one age," it must have

expired for want of posterity; so if all the male children of the Hebrews had perished, according to this law, in one age more the nation would have been extinct. This the parents of Moses feared not: they knew the promise of God for their preservation, multiplication, and deliverance, should take place notwithstanding all the laws of men, and the highest rage in their execution. And so they shall be at this day, let men make what laws they please, and execute them with all the subtilty and rage they think meet. This counsel of Pharaoh and his people is reported for a wise and subtile contrivance, with respect unto the end aimed at, Exod. 1:9, 10; Acts 7:17–19. However, they put one word into their law that made it "ipso facto" null and ineffectual. This was, that they should not multiply in Egypt. For God having promised unto Abraham that he would multiply his seed, and expressly unto Jacob, that he would do it in Egypt, Gen. 46:3, it utterly made void this law from its first enacting, whereby it became successless. And so it is with all laws, and so shall it finally be with them, that are made against any of the promises of God unto the church.

Yea, it is probable that about this time, or not long after, when God had fulfilled his design in this law,—which was in part the disposal of Moses unto such an education as might prepare him, and make him, as unto natural qualifications, meet for the work he would call him unto,—that there was some remission of bloody cruelty in the execution of it. For it was eighty years after the birth of Moses before the deliverance of the people, in which time they multiplied exceedingly, so as that this law could not have been executed. The force of it probably was broken in this preservation of Moses, God having in his miraculous deliverance given a pledge of what he would do in the whole people.

(3.) They had also a persuasion that God would provide a person who should be the means of their deliverance, and who should conduct them from their bondage. This Moses himself apprehended when he slew the Egyptian, and began to judge that he himself might be the person, Acts 7:24, 25. And although afterwards he judged himself unmeet for to be employed in that work, yet still he retained his persuasion that God had designed some certain person unto that employment, and that he would send him in his appointed time. Hence was that prayer of his, when God began to call him unto his work, "O my Lord, send, I pray thee, by the hand of him whom thou wilt send," Exod. 4:13. One he was sure he would send, but prayed that he might not be the man. Now, the parents of Moses having this persuasion deeply fixed in them, and being raised by their distresses unto desires and expectations of his coming, beholding the unusual, divine beauty of their child, might well be raised unto some just hopes

that God had designed him unto that great work. They had no especial revelation of it, but they had such an intimation of some great end God had designed him unto, as that they could not but say, 'Who knows but that God may have prepared this child for that end?' And sometimes, as unto the event of things, faith riseth no higher but unto such an interrogation; as Joel 2:13, 14.

5. Their faith was eminent in this, that in the discharge of their duty they feared not the king's edict. There is no mention of any thing in the order, but that every male child should be cast into the river, Exod. 1:22. But it is generally and rationally apprehended that they were forbid to conceal their children, on the pain of death. This they were not so afraid of as to neglect their duty. And the fear which they had was not from their own danger, which faith carried them above, but only as to the life of the child. This made them change their method, and, when they could no longer conceal him in the house, to commit him unto the providence of God in an ark, and to wait what would be the event thereof. And the issue did quickly manifest that they were led therein by a secret instinct and conduct of divine Providence.

There is no ground, therefore, to charge the parents of Moses herein with either undue fear or failing in faith. For as unto what concerned themselves or their own lives in the king's edict, they feared it not, as the apostle affirms. And such a fear as a solicitous care about the child's life must needs produce, is inseparable from our nature in such cases, and not blamable. Neither was their charge of method from want of faith, but rather an effect and fruit of it. For when one lawful way of preservation from persecution, oppression, and cruelty, will not secure us any longer, it is our duty to betake ourselves unto some other which is more likely so to do. For faith worketh by trust in God, whilst we are in the use of lawful means. And we have here an evident testimony that,—

Obs. V. The rage of men and the faith of the church shall work out the accomplishment of God's counsels and promises, unto his glory, from under all perplexities and difficulties that may arise in opposition unto it.—So they did in this instance in an eminent manner.

Hebrews 11: 24–26

Πίστει Μωϊσῆς μέγας γενόμενος ἠρνήσατο λέγεσθαι υἱὸς θυγατρὸς Φαραώ· μᾶλλον ἑλόμενος συγκακουχεῖσθαι τῷ λαῷ τοῦ Θεοῦ, ἢ πρόσκαιρον ἔχειν ἁμαρτίας ἀπόλαυσιν· μείζονα πλοῦτον ἡγησάμενος τῶν ἐν Αἰγύπτῳ θησαυρῶν τὸν ὀνειδισμὸν τοῦ Χριστοῦ· ἀπέβλεπε γὰρ εἰς τὴν μισθαποδοσίαν.

Μέγας γενόμενος. Syr., כַּד הֲוָא גַּבְרָא, "when he was now a man." Other considerable variations in translations there are none.

The latter clause of verse 25, ἢ πρόσκαιρον ἔχειν ἁμαρτίας ἀπόλαυσιν, is rendered by the Vulgar, "quam temporalis peccati habere jucunditatem:" which our Rhemists translate, "than to have the pleasure of temporal sin," by a double mistake; for instead of πρόσκαιρον they read προσκαίρου, joining it with ἁμαρτίας, contrary unto all ancient copies, and the exposition of the Greek scholiasts. And ἀπόλαυσις, which is "fruition" or "enjoyment," they render by "jucunditas," or "pleasure." Nor is the sense of the words, so translated, proper unto this place, as we shall see. Syr., "than for a short time to delight in sin."

Ἑλόμενος. Syr., וְגָבָא לֵהּ; "and he chose to" or "for himself;" he determined in himself and for himself.

Ἡγησάμενος. Syr., וְאִתְרָעִי; "and he thought;" Vulg Lat., "aestimans;" as we, "esteeming;" "arbitratus," "reputans." Τὸν ὀνειδισμόν, "probrum," "opprobrium." Vulg. Lat., "improbrium;" which the Rhemists render "reproach."

Ver. 24–26.—By faith Moses, when he was come to years, [being grown up,] refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season, [the transitory pleasure of sin]; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of reward.

This example is great and signal. The apostle, as we showed before, takes his instances from the three states of the church under the old testament. The first was that which was constituted in the giving of the first promise, continuing unto the call of Abraham. Herein his first instance is that of Abel, in whose sacrifice the faith of that state of the church was first publicly professed, and by whose martyrdom it was confirmed. The next state had its beginning and confirmation in the call of Abraham, with the covenant made with him, and the token thereof. He therefore is the second great instance upon the roll of testimonies. The constitution and consecration of the third state of the church was in the giving of the law; and herein an instance is given in the lawgiver himself. All to manifest, that whatever outward variations the church was liable unto, and passed under, yet faith and the promises were the same, of the same efficacy and power under them all.

Πίστει Μωϋσῆς. The person then here instanced in, as one that lived by faith, is Moses. And an eminent instance it is unto his purpose, especially in his dealing with the Hebrews, and that on sundry accounts:—

1 Of his person. None was ever in the old world more signalized by Providence, in his birth, education, and actions, than he was. Hence his renown, both then and in all ages after, was very great in the world. The report and estimation of his acts and wisdom were famous among all the nations of the earth. Yet this person lived and acted and did all his works by faith.

2. Of his great work, which was the typical redemption of the church. A work it was great in itself,—so God expresseth it to be, and such as was never wrought in the earth before, Deut. 4:32–34,—yet greater in the typical respect which it had unto the eternal redemption of the church by Jesus Christ.

3. On the account of his office. He was the lawgiver: whence it is manifest that the law is not opposite to faith, seeing the lawgiver himself lived thereby.

Obs. I. Whatever be the privileges of any, whatever be their work or office, it is by faith alone that they must live unto God, and obtain acceptance with him. The lawgiver himself was justified by faith.

There are three things in general in the words, setting forth the faith of Moses: 1 What he did in matter of fact, whereby his faith was evidenced, verse 24. 2. The interpretation of what he so did, by the nature and consequents of it, verse 25. 3. The ground and reason whereon he so acted and exercised his faith, verse 26.

Μέγας γενόμενος. In the FIRST of these, the first thing expressed is the time or season, or the condition wherein he thus acted his faith. Say we, "when he was come to years;" not accurately. Μέγας γενόμενος, "cùm esset grandis," "cùm grandis factus esset;" "when he became great." Syr., "when he was a man." But the word may respect either state and condition, or time of life and stature. To "become great," is, in the Scripture and common speech, to become so in wealth, riches, or power, Gen. 24:35, 26:13. And so was it now with Moses. He was come unto wealth, power, and honour, in the court of Pharaoh; and a respect hereunto seems to set forth the greatness of his self-denial, which is the eminent fruit of his faith that is here commended. He did this when he was great in the court of the king.

But although this be true materially, and hath an especial influence into the commendation of the faith of Moses, yet is it not intended in this expression. For, having declared the faith of his parents, and the providence of God towards him in his infancy, in the foregoing verse, the apostle here shows what was his own way of acting after he grew up unto years of understanding. So μέγας is used for one that is grown up to be "sui juris," or to be a man: Νῦν δὴ ὅτε δὴ μέγας εἰμί,

Hom. Od. ii. 314;—"I was an infant," saith Telemachus, "but now I am grown up," or grown great. It is "grandis" absolutely in Latin, though "grandis natu" be one stricken in years: "At ego nunc grandis, hunc grandem natu ad carnificinam dabo," Plaut. Capt.;—being grown up, being grown a man. "Cum adoleverit,"—"when he was grown up;" that is, come to years of understanding, to act the duty whereunto he was called.

Most expositors suppose this expresseth the time when he was forty years of age; for they refer the refusal to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter unto that act of his in slaying the Egyptian, which was "when he was full forty years old," Acts 7:23. And there is countenance given hereunto from what is affirmed, Exod. 2:11, "And it came to pass in those days, after Moses was grown up, that he went out unto his brethren;" where the Hebrew, וַיִּגְדַּל מֹשֶׁה, is rendered by the LXX. μέγας γενόμενος, the words here used by the apostle.

But although that time and fact be also included herein, yet the whole duty cannot be confined thereunto. For, as it was an act of faith, Moses had in his mind long before refused to be called "the son of Pharaoh's daughter;" that is, to renounce his own people, and to join himself unto the Egyptians. Wherefore the largest and most comprehensive interpretation of the words suits best with the sense of the place, or mind of the Holy Spirit therein. "According as he grew up in stature and understanding, he acted faith in the duties whereunto he was called." For the story mentioned by Josephus, of what he did in his infancy, by trampling on the crown of the king, when he would have placed it on his head, is undoubtedly fabulous. And,—

Obs. II. It is good to fill up every age and season with the duties which are proper thereunto. And it is the duty of all that are young, that, according as by time and instruction they come to the knowledge of what is required of them, they apply themselves vigorously and diligently thereunto. Not as is the manner of the most, whose inclinations to serve their lusts grow with their years and stature.

Secondly, What he did at that season is declared as the first effect, fruit, and indication of his faith. He "refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter."

Three things are here to be inquired into: 1. How and on what account he was esteemed and commonly called "the son of Pharaoh's daughter." 2. How and by what means he came to know that he was of another stock and race. 3. How did he refuse to be called "the son of Pharaoh's daughter?"

Υἱὸς θυγατρὸς φαραώ. 1. For the first, it is manifest from the story, Exod. 2;—upon her first finding him in the river, and saving of his life, she gave order to his mother, who appeared for a nurse, that she should nurse him for hers, and she would pay her wages, verse 9. Herein she owned it to be hers, or took the care of it on herself. But this she might do, and yet esteem and keep it only as a servant. So "servus" is called "à servando." She saved him, and he was hers. But when he was weaned, his mother carried him home unto her, she having probably often seen him in the meantime. And it must be acknowledged, that there was no less danger herein, no less a trial of the faith of his parents, than when they put him into an ark of bulrushes and set him floating on the river. For to carry a tender infant, probably about three years of age, to be bred in an idolatrous, persecuting court, was no less dangerous unto his soul and eternal condition than the exposing of him in the river was unto his natural life. But there is no doubt his parents, who were true believers, were now satisfied that in all these wonderful passages concerning him, there was some extraordinary design of Providence working effectually for some especial divine end. They resolved, therefore, to comply with the conduct thereof, and leave him to the sovereign care and disposal of God. And this, by the way, gives not the least countenance unto those parents who, for gain or advantage, or to please their humour, will dispose their children unto persons, ways, places, employments, wherein they cannot avoid dangerous and inextricable temptations.

But when Moses was thus brought to the court, unto Pharaoh's daughter, it is said, "He became her son." It is probable she had no other child, whether she was married or not. Wherefore being inclined both in her affection unto the child, which was beautiful, and by the marvellous manner of her finding and saving of him, by the consent of her father, she solemnly adopted him to be her son, and consequently the heir of all her honour and riches, which ensued on adoption. Hereon she gave him his name, as was usual in cases of adoption, taking it from the first occasion of her owning of him. She called his name Moses; and she said, "Because I drew him out of the water." Whether he had any other name given him in the house of his parents is uncertain. This is that which God would have him use, as a perpetual remembrance of his deliverance, when he was in a helpless condition.

Being thus publicly adopted and owned, he was by all esteemed, honoured, and called "the son of Pharaoh's daughter," without any respect unto his extraction from the Hebrews, though no doubt that also was commonly known

among the Egyptians; though the stories that Josephus, Philo, Clemens, from Ezekiel Tragicus, tell about him, and their fear of him, are justly to be suspected.

Some think that the then present king of Egypt had no child but that only daughter, whom they call Thermutis; and that this adopted son of hers was to succeed unto the crown. But this also is uncertain and improbable. But the secular interest, power, glory, honour, and wealth, which belonged unto him by virtue of this adoption, were such as the apostle calls "the treasures in Egypt," then one of the most rich and populous nations in the world. But,—

2. It may be inquired, how it was, and by what means, (supposing Moses to be carried unto Pharaoh's daughter presently after he was weaned, and thenceforth brought up in the court,) could he come to know his stock, race, and kindred, so as, upon all disadvantages, to cleave unto them, unto the relinquishment of his new, regal relation. I answer, there were many means thereof, which God made effectual unto this end.

(1.) His circumcision. He found himself circumcised, and so to belong unto the circumcised people. Hereon God instructed him to inquire into the reason and nature of that distinguishing character. And so he learned that it was the token of God's covenant with the people, the posterity of Abraham, of whom he was. It was a blessed inlet into the knowledge and fear of the true God. And whatever is pretended by some unto the contrary, it is a most eminent divine privilege, to have the seal of the covenant in baptism communicated unto the children of believers in their infancy; and a means it hath been to preserve many from fatal apostasies.

(2.) His nurse, who was his mother, as the custom is in such cases, was frequently with him; and probably his father also on the same account. Whether they were ever known to the Egyptians to be his parents, I very much question. But there is no doubt but that they, being persons truly fearing God, and solicitous about his eternal condition, did take care to communicate unto him the principles of true religion, with a detestation of the Egyptian idolatries and superstition.

(3.) The notoriety of the matter of fact was continually before him. It was known unto all Egypt that he was of Hebrew extraction, and now incorporated into the royal family of the Egyptians. Hereon he considered what these two people were, what was the difference between them; and quickly found which of them was the people of God, and how they came so to be.

By these means his mind was inlaid with the principles of faith and the true religion, before he was given up to learn "the wisdom of the Egyptians," and before the temptations from wealth, power, and glory, had any influence on his affections. And,—

Obs. III. It is a blessed thing to have the principles of true religion fixed in the minds of children, and their affections engaged unto them, before they are exposed unto temptations from learning, wisdom, wealth, or preferment.—And the negligence of most parents herein, who have none of those difficulties in the discharge of their duty which the parents of Moses had to conflict withal, is a treachery which they must be accountable for.

Ἠρνήσατο. Obs. IV. The token of God's covenant received in infancy, being duly considered, is the most effectual means to preserve persons in the profession of true religion against apostasy by outward temptations. 3. Our third inquiry is, How or when did Moses "refuse to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter?"

Some observe, that ἀρνέομαι signifies sometimes not only "to refuse" barely, but "to reject with indignation." But there is no need to affix any such signification unto it in this place. The sense of it is determined in the opposite act of "choosing," mentioned in the next place. Choosing and refusing are opposite acts of the mind, both of the same kind.

Some restrain this refusal unto that act of his in slaying the Egyptian, wherein he declared that he owned not his alliance unto the court of Egypt. But whereas it is the internal frame and act of his mind that are here intended, it is not to be confined unto any particular outward action, much less unto that which fell not out until he was full forty years old, Acts 7:23, and before which it is said that he owned the Israelites for his brethren: "He went out unto his brethren, and looked on their burdens," Exod. 2:11; which he could not do without a resolution to relinquish his relation unto Pharaoh's daughter.

Wherefore this refusal consisted in general in three things: (1.) In the sedate resolution of his mind, not finally to abide and continue in that state whereinto he was brought by his adoption. And this was not attained unto without great consideration, with great exercise of faith in prayer and trust in God. For this refusal was an act and fruit of faith, of whose power it is here given as an instance. The least sedate consideration of his circumstances, of what he was, what he was to leave, what he was to undergo, (whereof in the next verses,) will evidence unto any what conflicts of mind, what reasonings and fears he was

exercised withal; what self-denial and renunciation of all earthly advantages he herein engaged into. Herein principally consisted the refusal which is here celebrated as a fruit and evidence of faith. (2.) No doubt but, as he had occasion, he did converse and confer with his brethren, not only owning himself to be of their stock and race, but also of their faith and religion, and to belong unto the same covenant. (3.) When there was no longer a consistency between his faith and profession to be continued with his station in the court, he openly and fully fell off from all respect unto his adoption, and joined himself unto the other people, as we shall see in the following verse. And we may observe from hence, that,—

Obs. V. The work of faith in all ages of the church, as unto its nature, efficacy, and method of its actings, is uniform and the same.—They had not of old a faith of one kind, and we of another. This in general is the design of the apostle to prove in this whole chapter. It hath been varied in its degrees of light by outward revelations, but in itself from first to last it is still the same. And hereof the instance here insisted on is a most evident demonstration. The first act of faith purely evangelical is self-denial, Matt. 16:24; Luke 9:23. And what greater instance of it, unless it were in Jesus Christ himself, can be given since the foundation of the world, than in what is here recorded of Moses? He was in the quiet possession of all the secular advantages which a man not born of the royal family could enjoy, and perhaps in a just expectation of them also. He was every way able honourably to fill up his place and trust in the discharge of all public offices committed unto him; for "he was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and in deeds," even before he fell off from the court, Acts 7:22. Wherefore, his personal eminency above other men, joined with his high place and dignity, procured him all the popular veneration which he could desire. And he was of that age (for he continued in this state from his infancy full forty years) wherein these things give the greatest gust and relish of themselves unto the minds of men. For him now, voluntarily and of his own accord, to relinquish them all, and to betake himself to dangers, poverty, banishment, without any prospect of relief, and that merely, as we shall see immediately, upon the account of the promise of Christ, must be acknowledged to be comprehensive of all the acts, parts, and duties of evangelical self-denial.

For, as that which gives life, form, and power, unto self-denial, doth not consist in the respect which it hath unto the outward things which any one may be called therein to forego; but in the mortification of the desires and affections of the mind which would put a valuation on these things, when they stand in

competition with things heavenly and spiritual: so this was in Moses in a most eminent degree. He left not his outward enjoyments until he had crucified his heart unto them, esteeming them but loss and dung in comparison of Christ, and what was in him to be enjoyed.

But in the days wherein we live, we have more Esaus than Moseses,—more who for morsels of bread, for outward, secular advantages, will sell their birthright, or part with religion and profession of the truth conveyed unto them by their parents; than who will abandon self, with all that belongs thereunto, with a resignation of themselves unto the will of God for their whole satisfaction and reward, rather than part with one tittle of truth.

SECONDLY, But the next verse is an exposition of this refusal of Moses, declaring the nature of it, and what was contained therein.

Ver. 25.—"Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season."

There are two things to be considered in these words: 1. That there were at this time two things proposed unto Moses; first, The "people of God" in their afflicted state; secondly, The enjoyment of "the pleasures of sin for a season." 2. The determination he made as unto his own interest and concernment; he "chose rather," etc.

1 In the first sundry things may be considered:—

Τῷ λαῷ τοῦ Θεοῦ. (1.) Who were this "people of God;" that is, in contradistinction and opposition unto all other people and nations whatever? These were the Hebrews, the posterity of Jacob, then in Egypt; that is, the brethren of Moses, Exod. 2:10, 11.

(2.) How did these Hebrews come to be thus the people of God in a peculiar manner, in opposition unto all other people whatever? Now this was by virtue of that especial covenant which God made with Abraham and his seed throughout all generations; the token whereof they bare in their flesh. Therein God became their God, and they became his people: which relation cannot be any otherwise raised between God and any of the children of men, but by virtue of a covenant. And,—

Obs. I. Let hence no man be offended at the low, mean, persecuted condition of the church at any time.—All God's people, and the only people he had then in the world, were only a company of brick-makers, under hard and cruel task-masters. And whoever would belong to the people of God was to cast in his lot among them; as it was with Moses. Wherefore,—

Obs. II. The sovereign wisdom of God, in disposing the outward state and condition of his people in this world, is to be submitted unto.—He only knows what is good for them, and for the concernments of his glory in them.

Obs. III. It is certain there is somewhat contained in this title and privilege that is infinitely above all outward things that may be enjoyed in this world, and which doth inexpressibly outbalance all the evils that are in it. For otherwise men might be losers by the nearest relation unto God; and he should not be himself an all-satisfactory reward.

Obs. IV. The church, in all its distresses, is ten thousand times more honourable than any other society of men in the world;—they are "the people of God." And we may observe, "That their being so, and withal professing and avowing themselves so to be, is that which provokes the world against them, and which is the cause of all their persecutions. The world cannot endure to hear a company of poor, despised persons, perhaps little better, at least in their sight, than these Egyptian brick-makers, should take to themselves and own this glorious title of "the people of God." Other things they pretend against them, as the Egyptians did against the Israelites; namely, that whereas they are a people who have a peculiar interest of their own, there is danger of sedition from them against the state, Exod. 1:9, 10. This is the usual pretence. The true cause of their rage is, their profession that they are the people of God, and have a right unto all the privileges accompanying that title.

Συγκακουχεῖσθαι. (3.) This people of God is proposed to Moses as under "affliction," so as that if he will join himself to them, it must be with a participation of the outward evils that they were subject unto. Συγκακουχεῖσθαι. The word is used only in this place. It signifies "to be vexed and pressed with things evil and grievous." And our expression, of being "afflicted," or "suffering affliction," according to the common understanding of that expression, scarce reacheth unto the emphasis of the original word,—"to be pressed, vexed, distressed with things evil, burdensome, destructive to nature."

What were the afflictions and sufferings of the people of God at that time, is known. It is not only related in the Scripture, with their sighs, sorrows, and cries under them, but they are frequently mentioned afterwards as the highest distresses that human nature could be exposed unto.

But it may be inquired, how a participation in these sufferings was proposed unto Moses, seeing it was not required of him, nor was he called unto it, to work in the same kilns and furnaces with his brethren. I say, it is not at all here

intimated that he was so; but only, considering their woful condition, he cast in his lot among them, to take that portion which fell to his share. He made no bargain or contract for himself, but choosing their condition, referred himself for his part and share unto the guidance of divine Providence. And this fell out in the danger of his life, his flight out of Egypt, his long poor condition in Midian, with all the evils that befell him afterwards.

Πρόσκαιρον ἐχειν ἁμαρτίας ἀπόλαυσιν. Secondly, That which was proposed unto him in opposition hereunto was, as we render the words, "to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season,"—to have the temporary enjoyment of sin. Ἀπόλαυσις is "fruition" or "enjoyment," and is usually applied to signify such a fruition as hath gust and relish in it, yielding delight and pleasure unto them that have it; as all enjoyment in some measure doth, nor is any man said to enjoy that which he doth not take some satisfaction in. Hence we have rendered it "pleasures," in the plural number. For the best that sin, or any thing that is enjoyed with sin, can pretend unto, is but present, transitory pleasure.

To clear the meaning of the words, we must observe, (1.) That no man makes sin, as sin, under its formal notion, to be the object of his desires, nor can be said to have or possess the fruition of it. (2.) That the things here intended are those which accompanied his being the son of Pharaoh's daughter, called "the treasures of Egypt" in the next verse. (3.) That those things might absolutely and in themselves be enjoyed and used without sin; and so they were by him, until the appointed time came wherein he was called from them. (4.) They would therefore have become sin unto him, not in themselves, but in their enjoyment; and that for two reasons: [1.] Because they would have hindered him from the performance of a duty necessary unto the glory of God and his own salvation, as we shall see immediately. [2.] Because he could not so enjoy them without a conjunction with the Egyptians, it may be, in their idolatries, but, to be sure, in the persecution and oppression of the people of God.

Wherefore, to have or hold the fruition of sin, in this place, is to continue in the enjoyment of all outward advantages by the means of the greatest sin imaginable, namely, the neglect of the only great duty incumbent on us in this world, or the profession of faith in God and the true religion on the one hand, and persecuting the church of God on the other.

This enjoyment of sin is said to be πρόσκαιρος, "temporary," "for a season;" subject unto a thousand interruptions in this life, and unavoidably ending with it.

Thus were things truly represented and proposed to the thoughts of Moses. They were so by himself. He hid not his eyes from the worst on the one hand; nor did he suffer himself to be imposed on by the flattering appearances on the other. He omitted no circumstances that might influence a right judgment in his choice. He considered the worst of the people of God, which is their affliction; and the best of the world, which is but the evanid pleasure of sin; and preferred the worst of the one above the best of the other.

Μᾶλλον ἑλόμενος. 2. The work of his faith is expressed in the act of his mind with respect unto these different objects. He chose the one rather than the other. They were proposed unto the elective power or faculty of his soul; that whereby, upon the due consideration and pondering of things and their reasons, it is able to embrace that which is truly good unto it or best for it, and refuse whatever stands in competition with it. His choice hereby, on mature deliberation, may be expressed in the conclusions which he made in his own mind on this occasion; as,—

(1.) That those two opposite states were divinely proposed unto his consideration, as those wherein his concernment did lie, and unto one of which he must associate himself. He found that he could not be happy alone, nor perform his duty, nor enjoy things that were good and desirable. And these two sorts are always in the world, and are made conspicuous in a time of persecution. Some think they may pass their time here without a relation unto, or a conjunction with either of these societies. They will neither join themselves, as they suppose, to the persecuted church nor to the persecuting world. But they deceive themselves; for if they choose not the one, they do belong unto the other.

(2.) That those states, and an interest in them, were irreconcilable, so as that he could not enjoy the good things of them both, but adhering unto the one, he must renounce the other. If he cleave to "the treasures of Egypt," he must renounce "the people of God;" and if he join himself unto the people of God, he must renounce all his interest in Egypt. This he saw necessary, from that profession which God required of him, and from the nature of the promise which that profession did respect.

(3.) He passed a right judgment concerning the true nature and end of those things, which were to be enjoyed in his continuing as the son of Pharaoh's daughter. Notwithstanding all their glittering appearance, they were in themselves temporary, fading, perishing; and unto him would be sinful, pernicious, and destructive.

(4.) Hereon he was determined in his mind, and actually made his choice of the state and condition which he would embrace. He "chose rather to suffer affliction," etc. The reason of which judgment and choice is more fully expressed in the next verse. And we may observe,—

Obs. V. That in a time of great temptations, especially from furious persecutors, a sedate consideration of the true nature of all things wherein we are concerned, and their circumstances on every hand, is necessary to enable us unto a right choice of our lot, and a due performance of our duty.—The things we are to lose, in houses, lands, possessions, liberty, and life itself, make an appearance of a desirableness not to be overcome. And the distresses, on the other hand, of a persecuted estate, appear very terrible. If the mind leave itself unto the conduct of its affections in this matter, it will never make a right choice and determination. Faith enables the soul to divest the things on either side of their flattering or frightening appearances, and to make a right judgment of them in their proper nature and ends.

Obs. VI. No profession will endure the trial in a time of persecution, but such as proceeds from a determinate choice of adhering unto Christ and the gospel, with a refusal and rejection of whatever stands in competition with them, on a due consideration of the respective natures and ends of the things proposed unto us on the one hand and the other;—that is, the loss of all temporal good things, and the undergoing of all that is temporally evil. Those who engage unto a profession on such light convictions of truth, or other inferior grounds, as it were at peradventures, will scarce endure when it comes unto a trial, like that which Moses underwent.

Obs. VII. He chose to be afflicted with the people of God; and so must every one do who will be of them unto his advantage.—Our Lord Jesus Christ warns us, that some will entertain the gospel, but when persecution ariseth for the word, immediately they fall away. They would have him, but not with his cross; and his gospel, but not with its burden. And of the same Samaritan sect there are multitudes in every age. They would be accounted of the people of God, but they will have nothing to do with their afflictions. They have ways of

compliance to keep their own peace and wealth, it may be their places and profits, without being concerned in the afflictions of the people of God. But those who will not have their afflictions shall never have their privileges; and so it is all one whether they profess themselves to belong unto them or no.

Obs. VIII. Men fearfully delude themselves, in the choice they make about profession in times of persecution.—The choice which they have to make is really and singly between the pleasures of sin, and those to be enjoyed but for a little while; and present sufferings attended with an eternal reward, as the next verse declares. But for the most part men have other notions of things, and suppose they may come off with some distinctions or limitations, like that of Naaman, and save themselves.

THIRDLY, The grounds whereon Moses proceeded are expressed in the next verse.

Ver. 26.—"Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward."

Ἡγησάμενος. The words contain the ground and reason of the choice of Moses, mentioned in the foregoing verse. And this is, the judgment which he made concerning the things which he chose and those which he refused, being compared one with the other. "Esteeming," or having esteemed, determined and judged. And,—

1. There are the things themselves expressed concerning which he passed a judgment, namely, "the reproach of Christ" on the one hand, and "the treasures of Egypt" on the other. 2. The common notion under which he considered them both, and by an especial interest wherein the one was preferred before the other; and this was "riches,"—he judged one to be "greater riches" than the other. 3. The especial reason whereby the things which he chose approved themselves in his mind to be greater riches than the other, namely, from "the recompence of the reward" which belonged unto them, and was inseparable from them.

Τὸν ὀνειδισμὸν τοῦ Χριστοῦ. 1. The thing which he chose he calls "the reproach of Christ." This must be the same with what he calls being "afflicted with the people of God," in the verse foregoing, only with an addition of a consideration under which it was peculiarly eligible. What is this "reproach of Christ," we must inquire.

Much endeavour hath been used by some to remove the consideration of Christ, as then proposed unto the church in the promise, out of the words. Grotius and his follower would have "the reproach of Christ" to be only such kinds of reproach, sufferings, and afflictions, as Christ himself afterwards, and Christians for Christ, did undergo. Of the same mind is Crellius, who feigns at least a catachresis in the words, arising out of sundry tropes and metaphors. But he thinks that chiefly the afflictions of the people of Israel were called the reproach of Christ, because they were a type of Christ, that is, of Christians in some sense. So unwilling are some to admit any faith of Christ, or knowledge of him, into the religion of the ancient patriarchs. But,—

(1.) Ὁ Χριστός, as here, is never used for any type of Christ, for any but Christ himself. (2.) If Moses underwent reproaches as the type of Christ, and knew that he did so, then he believed in Christ; which is the thing they would deny. (3.) The immediate reason of the persecution of the Israelites was, because they would not coalesce into one people with the Egyptians, but would still retain and abide by their distinct interests and hopes. Now, their perseverance herein was grounded on their faith in the promise made unto Abraham, which was concerning Christ. So these things have nothing of solidity in them.

But the mind of the apostle is evident in this expression. For,—

(1.) From the first promise concerning the exhibition of the Son of God in the flesh, Christ was the life, soul, and the all of the church, in all ages. From him all was derived, and in him all centred: "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to day, and for ever;"—a "Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." To deny this, is to destroy the whole mystery of the wisdom of God under the old testament, and in particular, to overthrow the whole apostolical exposition of it in this epistle.

(2.) Being so, he was the original cause or occasion of the sufferings of the church in all ages. All the persecutions of the church arose from the enmity between the two seeds, which entered upon the promise of Christ. And the adherence of believers unto that promise is the only cause of that separation from the world, which is the immediate cause of all their persecution. Wherefore, "the reproach of Christ," in the first place, signifies the reproach which upon the account of Christ, or their faith in him, they did undergo. For all outward observances in the church, in all ages, are but the profession of that faith.

(3.) Christ and the church were considered from the beginning as one mystical body; so as that what the one underwent, the other is esteemed to undergo the same. Hence it is said, that "in all their affliction he was afflicted," Isa. 63:9. And the apostle Paul calls his own sufferings, "that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ," Col. 1:24,—namely, which belonged unto the full allotment of sufferings unto that mystical body whereof Christ is the head. And in this sense also the afflictions of the church are the afflictions of Christ.

(4.) Somewhat of that which is here called "the reproach of Christ" is called by the same apostle "the marks of the Lord Jesus in his body," Gal. 6:17; or the stripes which he endured, with the marks of them that remained, for the sake of Jesus Christ. And so are all the sufferings of the church the reproach of Christ, because it is for his sake alone that they undergo them, and it is he alone whom they lay in the balance against them all.

2. All the sufferings of the people of God for the sake of Christ are called his "reproach." For all sorts of afflictions, persecutions, and oppressions from men, on the account of the profession of the truth, are intended. And they are so called on a double account: (1.) Because the foundation of them all is always laid in reproach. The world can neither justify nor countenance itself in its persecutions of the church, unless they first cover it all over with reproaches. So dealt they with our Lord Jesus Christ himself. They attempted not to take away his life, before the rage of the people was by all manner of reproaches stirred up against him. So it is in all the persecutions and sufferings of the church. They are always represented as heretics, schismatics, or seditious persons, opposite to all good order in church and state, before they are exposed to violence. And this also is usually accompanied with contempt, scorn, mocking, and false accusations. Wherefore, all the sufferings of believers may be denominated from this rise and entrance of them. (2.) There is nothing in sufferings that is more sharp and terrible unto ingenuous souls than this reproach is; nothing that hath more of a severe trial in it. Hence the psalmist, in the person of Christ, complains that "reproach had broken his heart," Ps. 69:19, 20. And the apostle mentions "cruel mockings," verse 36 of this chapter, where we shall speak of them. (3.) They are so called, because all the persecutions of the church do arise from the enmity, hatred, scorn, and contempt, which the world hath of and towards Christ himself, or the mystery of the wisdom of God for the salvation of sinners in and by him. And we may observe in our passage, that,—

Obs. I. Reproach hath in all ages, from the beginning of the world, attended Christ and all the sincere professors of faith in him; which in God's esteem is upon his account.—One of his last acts in this world was his conflicting with ignominy and shame; which he overcame with contempt, Heb. 12:2, 3. And his apostles began their ministry with "suffering shame for his name's sake," Acts 5:41. But when the mystery of iniquity began to work, one great design in it was, for the rulers of the church and their adherents to quit themselves of this reproach and scorn from the world; which indeed they did not deserve. Wherefore, they contrived all ways whereby they might attain wealth, honour, grandeur, and veneration in the world; wherein they succeeded, unto the ruin of Christian religion.

τῶν ἐν Αἰγύπτω θησαυρῶν. 3. That which Moses compared herewithal was "the treasures of Egypt;" the treasures that were in Egypt. "Treasures" properly are riches in gold, silver, precious stones, and other things highly valuable, that are stored, hid, and laid up. But when there is mention of the treasures of a nation, they include all those profits and advantages of it also whence those treasures are gathered. In both respects, Egypt, whilst it flourished, was behind no kingdom in the world. What was, and what might be, the interest of Moses in these treasures, we before declared. But in this matter he doth not so much, or at least not only, consider them as unto his own share and interest, but also absolutely what they were in themselves. He considered what they were, what they would amount unto, what might be done with them or attained by them, and prefers the reproach of Christ above them all. For,—

Obs. II. Let the things of this world be increased and multiplied into the greatest measures and degrees imaginable, it alters not their kind.—They are temporary, fading, and perishing still; such as will stand men in no stead on their greatest occasions, nor with respect unto eternity.

Now, these things were not considered by Moses in the notion of them, but he saw them daily exemplified before his face. He saw "the treasures of Egypt," with the state, glory, gallantry, and power of the court, by whom they were enjoyed, and what supply they had for all their lusts and desires. And he saw the poor, oppressed, scorned people of God, in their bearing "the reproach of Christ." Yet in this present view of them, when it most highly affected him, he did in his mind, judgment, and resolution, prefer the latter before the former, so as to choose it and embrace it. This is that which faith will effect. Let us go and do likewise.

Μείζονα πλοῦτον. 4. These things Moses considered under the notion of "riches." He "esteemed the reproach of Christ to be greater riches." Riches, opulency, wealth, contain all that men love and value in this world; all that is of use unto them for all the ends of life; all that they desire, and place their happiness in,—at least so far, that they judge they cannot be happy without them. Hence two things are denoted in the word: (1.) That which is the principal means of all the ends of life. (2.) An abundance of it. On these accounts the word is frequently used by the Holy Ghost to denote the spiritual things which God prepares for and gives unto believers, with the greatness, the abundance, the excellency of them. They are called "riches," "durable substance," "treasures;" and are said to be "richly" or "abundantly communicated," for there is in them an all-sufficiency, in all things, for all the ends of man's life and blessedness. So doth the apostle here call them "riches," with an especial respect also to "the treasures of Egypt," which were their riches.

Obs. III. There is therefore an all-satisfactory fulness in spiritual things, even when the enjoyment of them is under reproach and persecution, unto all the true ends of the blessedness of men.

5. Lastly, There is in the words the ground whereon Moses made his judgment concerning these things, and what it was which influenced his mind into that determination. For although he might on some accounts prefer "the reproach of Christ" unto "the treasures of Egypt," yet it doth not easily occur on what ground he should judge that it was "greater riches" than they, or more sufficient unto all the ends of men's lives and blessedness. Wherefore the ground of this judgment being taken from a due consideration of what did accompany this reproach of Christ, and was inseparably annexed unto it, is expressed in these words, "For he had respect unto the recompence of the reward."

Ἀπέβλεπε. "He had respect," ἀπέβλεπε, "intuitus est;" he looked on, he saw by the eyes of faith, as represented in the promise; he took into consideration.

Τήν μισθαποδοσίαν. "The recompence of the reward;" "praemii retributionem," "largitionem;" "mercedis redditionem;" the gratuitous reward that God hath annexed unto faith and obedience, not merited or deserved by them, but infallibly annexed unto them, in a way of sovereign bounty.

Τάρ. The causal conjunction, "for," is introductive of the reason whereon Moses made the judgment before declared.

Schlichtingius is mute as unto this reward, not knowing, as it should seem, how to avoid the force of this plain testimony concerning the faith which believers under the old testament had of eternal rewards, by virtue of God's promise. Grotius is bold, in his usual manner, and refers it to the possession of the land of Canaan. Hammond forsakes his guide, and extends it unto things eternal. Nor can there be any thing more improbable than the conjecture of Grotius; for neither did Moses ever enter into the land of Canaan, nor was the interest of his posterity therein to be any way compared with the treasures of Egypt.

But the apostle gives us here a pregnant instance of that description of faith which he gave us in the first verse of the chapter, namely, that it was "the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen;" for both these were seen in this faith of Moses. It gave him an evidence of the invisible things of the eternal reward; and caused them so to subsist in their power and foretaste in his mind, as that he chose and preferred them above all things present and visible. And,—

Obs. IV. Such signal exemplifications of the nature and efficacy of faith in others, especially when victorious against mighty oppositions, as they were in Moses, are high encouragements unto us unto the like exercise of it in the like circumstances.

Now whereas, as was said, and as is plain in the text, this is the ground whereon Moses made the judgment declared, it is evident that the whole thereof, and of his faith therein, is resolved into this certain and immovable truth, that God in his purpose, promise, and constitution of his word, hath immutably annexed a blessed reward unto the reproach of Christ, or the undergoing of it by believers.

We must therefore inquire, (1.) What this "recompence of reward" is; and, (2.) How Moses had "respect unto it."

(1.) That this "recompence of reward" includes in it, yea, principally respects, the eternal reward of persecuted believers in heaven, is out of question. But whereas God is in his covenant a present reward unto them, Gen. 15:1; and that in the present keeping of his commandments there is a great reward, Ps. 19:11; as also, that the spiritual wisdom, grace, mercy, and consolation, that believers receive in this world, are "riches," "treasures," and "durable substance;" I doubt not but the blessed peace, rest, and satisfaction which they have, in a

comfortable persuasion of their covenant-interest in God, are also included herein. But even these also have their power and efficacy from their inseparable relation unto the eternal reward.

(2.) This reward he had "respect" unto; which compriseth three things: [1.] He believed it upon divine revelation and promise; and that so steadfastly and with such assurance, as if he held it, or had seen it with his eyes. [2.] He valued it according to its worth and desert, as that which was to be preferred incomparably above all present things. [3.] He brought it into reckoning and account, in the judgment which he was to make concerning the reproach of Christ and the treasures of Egypt. And this was the victory whereby he overcame the world, even his faith.

And sundry observations, for our own use and instruction, we may take from this example of the faith of Moses and its success.

But we must first of all observe in general, that the consideration of this example is principally required of us in those seasons wherein we are brought into the like circumstances with him,—that is, a time of great distress, oppression, and persecution of the church; and unto such a season is this example here applied by the apostle. So we may learn,—

Obs. V. It is our duty, in the whole course of our faith and obedience, to have respect unto the future recompence of reward, but it is so especially in times of great persecution and oppression of the church, wherein we are and resolve to be sharers;—a respect, not as unto that which we shall deserve by what we do or suffer; nor as that which principally influenceth us unto our obedience or suffering, which is the love of God in Christ; nor as that between which and what we do there is any proportion, like that between work and wages; but only as unto that which divine bounty hath proposed unto us for our encouragement, or as that which becomes the divine goodness and righteousness freely to grant unto them that believe and obey. See our exposition on chap. 6:10. But this I add, that we are to have this respect unto the future reward principally, or to have faith in exercise about it, in the times of danger, persecution, and oppression. Nor is this respect unto the reward anywhere mentioned in the Scripture, but it is still with regard unto sufferings and tribulations. See Matt. 5:11, 12, 10:39; Luke 6:35; Heb. 10:35; Rev. 22:12. For as in such a season we do stand in need of that view and consideration of the future reward which we may lay in the balance against all our present sufferings; so it becomes the greatness, goodness, and righteousness of God, that those who

suffer from the world for him, and according to his will, should have that proposed and assured unto them, for their encouragement, which is incomparably greater in goodness and blessedness than what they can suffer from the world is in evil, loss, and trouble. And therefore frequently where believers are encouraged with an expectation of this reward, they are so also with being minded of that recompence of reward, in vengeance and punishment, which shall befall their wicked persecutors; both of them being on many accounts alike suited unto their encouragement. See Phil. 1:28; 2 Thess. 1:4–10.

Obs. VI. It is faith only that can carry us through the difficulties, trials, and persecutions, which we may be called unto for the sake and name of Christ.—Moses himself, with all his wisdom, learning, courage, and resolution, had never been able to have gone through with his trials and difficulties, had not faith had the rule and government of his mind and heart, had he not kept it in exercise on all occasions. And in vain shall any of us, in such a season, expect deliverance or success by any other way or means. A thousand other things may present themselves unto our minds, for our relief or preservation in such a season; but they will all prove fruitless, dishonourable shifts, or snares and temptations, unto the ruin of our souls. We are "kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation."

Obs. VII. Faith in exercise, will carry us safely and securely through all the trials which we have to undergo for Christ and the gospel.—As there is no other way for our safety, success, and victory, so this will never fail us. Consider all circumstances, and it is almost impossible that our temptations and trials should be greater than those of Moses: howbeit faith carried him safely through them all, as we shall see further in the next verses. How it doth it, whence it derives its power and efficacy for this end; what are the ways of its working, and how it engageth all our graces unto its assistance; by what means it resists, refels, and conquers oppositions; how it strengthens, relieves, and comforts the souls of them that believe; is not my present work to declare: I only, with the apostle, propose an example of what it hath done, as a document and evidence of what it will do in like cases.

Obs. VIII. Faith is highly rational, in all its acts of obedience towards God.—It reckoneth, computeth, judgeth, chooseth, determineth, in the most exalted acts of reason. All these things are here ascribed unto Moses in the exercise of his faith. I would willingly insist hereon, to vindicate the honour of faith from the imputations that are cast on all its actings in the world, as weak and foolish;

or that it is nothing but an engine or pretence set up unto the ruin of reason, and the use of it in the lives of men. And if we cannot prove that the wisdom of faith, and the reason wherewith and whereon it always acts, are the most eminent that our nature is capable of in this world, and that whatever is contrary to them or inconsistent with them is arrant folly, and contrary to the primigenial light of our nature, and all the principles of reason truly so called, we shall freely give up the cause of faith unto the vainest pretences of reason that foolish men can make. But a resolution not to engage in such discourses, on this occasion, will not allow me to enter on a further demonstration of this truth.

Hebrews 11: 27

Πίστει κατέλιπεν Αἴγυπτον, μὴ φοβηθεὶς τὸν θύμον τοῦ βασιλέως· τὸν γὰρ ἀόρατον ὡς ὁρῶν ἐκαρτέρησε.

Τὸν θύμον. Vulg. Lat., "animositatem;" which the Rhemists translate, "fierceness." Syr., מֶן חֲמָתֵהּ, "from the fury of the king." "Iram," "iracundiam;" or as we, very properly, "the wrath."

Ἐκαρτέρησε. Vulg. Lat., "invisibilem tanquam videns sustinuit." Rhem., "for him that is invisible he sustained, as if he had seen him;" very improperly, and without any due sense. They make ἐκαρτέρησε to be a verb transitive, and to affect "him that is invisible;" whereas it is plainly used in a neutral sense, or it hath none at all. Nor is the phrase of "sustinere Deum" anywhere used. Syr., וְסַבַּד, "and he hoped," or "trusted, as one who saw him who is invisible." "Fortiter obduravit;" "forti animo fuit." We properly, "endured."

Ver. 27.—By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible.

Having declared the faith of Moses with respect unto the sufferings of the people of God, the apostle proceedeth in like manner to instance in the power and acting of it with respect unto their deliverance; which here he mentions in general, and afterwards insists on in some particulars.

There are three things in the words ascribed unto the faith of Moses: 1. What he did, "He left Egypt." 2. The manner how he did it: "Not fearing the wrath of the king." 3. The reason or ground of his so doing it: "For he endured," etc.

Κατέλιπεν Αἴγυπτον. 1. That which he did is, that "he left Egypt;" and he did it "by faith." Moses did twice leave Egypt; first when he had slain the Egyptian, and fled upon its discovery, Exod. 2:14, 15; and a second time when he carried away the people with him out of Egypt, which he entered into, chap. 10:29.

Some think that the apostle intends his first departure, and that on this reason, because it is mentioned before the celebration of the passover, whereas it is evident in the story that his last departure was after it. And they suppose they can reconcile what is affirmed in Exodus, namely, that "he feared," to wit, "the wrath of the king," who sought to slay him, chap. 2:14, 15; and what is here declared by the apostle, that "he feared not the wrath of the king." For they say, that although he had a natural fear which moved him to use the proper means for the preservation of his life, yet he had no such fear as should overthrow his faith, or hinder him from committing himself to the providence of God for his preservation, when he fled from so mighty a monarch, who had long hands to reach him wherever he was.

But it is not likely, nay, it is not true, that the apostle intends that first departure out of Egypt. For, (1.) It is said there expressly, that he "fled from the face of Pharaoh;" that is, in haste and with fear: here, that he "left Egypt;" which expresseth a sedate act of his mind, and that with respect unto the whole country and all the concerns of it. (2.) It is not likely that the apostle would take his instance of the victorious faith of Moses from that fact and place wherein there is no mention made of his faith, but of that which was contrary unto it, namely, his fear. "By faith he left Egypt," is not a proper interpretation of "He feared, and fled from the face of Pharaoh." (3.) That which the apostle intends was accompanied with, or immediately followed by, his keeping of the passover, which was forty years and somewhat more after his first flight out of Egypt.

Wherefore, although this leaving of Egypt may be a general expression of his whole conduct of the people thence into the wilderness, yet the apostle hath a peculiar respect unto what is recorded, Exod. 10:28, 29: "And Pharaoh said unto him, Get thee from me, take heed to thyself, see my face no more; for in that day thou seest my face thou shalt die. And Moses said, Thou hast spoken well; I will see thy face again no more." Never was there a higher expression of faith, and spiritual courage thereon: whence it is said, chap. 11:8, that he threatened Pharaoh, that all his servants should come and bow down before him; and so "went out from him in a great anger," or the height of indignation against his obstinate rebellion against God. He had before him a bloody tyrant, armed with all the power of Egypt, threatening him with present death if he persisted in the work and duty which God had committed unto him; but he was so far from being terrified, or declining his duty in the least, that he professeth his resolution to proceed, and denounceth destruction to the tyrant himself.

Μὴ φοβηθεὶς τὸν θυμὸν τοῦ βασιλέως. 2. This was the manner of his leaving Egypt: "He feared not the wrath of the king." And assigning it unto this act and carriage of his, wherein he may justly and properly be said to leave Egypt, when he renounced a continuance therein and addressed himself unto a departure, it is properly placed immediately before his keeping of the passover; which sufficiently resolves the difficulty proposed on the behalf of the first opinion.

And we may observe the different frames of mind that were in Moses on these several occasions. In the first of them, when it was reported that Pharaoh sought to slay him, it is said, "He feared and fled;" but here, when probably another Pharaoh, no less powerful, cruel, and bloody than the former, threatened him with present death, he is so far from being moved at it, that he declares his resolution to persist in his duty, and threatens the tyrant himself. And the reason of this difference was, that on the first occasion Moses had made an attempt into what he apprehended his duty, without a sufficient call and warranty from God; wherein he could not stir up faith unto an exercise, which will not move without a divine word for its warranty; and natural courage would not carry him out in his undertaking: now, being assured of his call as well as of his work, he is bold as a lion, through the power of faith acting regularly on a word of promise and command.

Obs. I. In all duties, especially such as are attended with great difficulties and dangers, it is the wisdom of believers to take care not only that the works of them be good in themselves, but that they have a just and due call unto their performance.—When they have so, and are satisfied therein, there is nothing that faith will not conflict withal and conquer; but if they are weak in this foundation of duty, they will find that faith will not be engaged unto their assistance.

Obs. II. Even the wrath of the greatest kings is to be disregarded, if it lie against our duty towards God.—See the great and glorious instance, Dan. 3:13–18.

3. Lastly, The ground and reason of what he did, with the inward frame of his spirit in doing of it, is expressed: "He endured, as seeing him who is invisible."

Ἐκαρτέρησε. The word ἐκαρτέρησε, which we render "endured," is not used in the New Testament but in this place only. It is derived from κράτος (by the transposition of a letter), which is "strength, power, and fortitude." The use of it in other authors, is "to bear evils, or to undergo dangers with patience, courage,

and resolution, so as not to wax weary or faint under them, but to hold out unto the end." Καρτερέω: "forti animo sum, non cedo malis;"—a word singularly suited to express the frame of mind that was in Moses with respect unto this work of faith in leaving Egypt. For he met with a long course of various difficulties, and was often threatened by the king; besides what he had to conflict with from the unbelief of the people. But he strengthened and confirmed his heart with spiritual courage, and resolution to abide in his duty unto the end.

So is καρτερία, joined with ἀνδρία, "fortitude," as of the same nature; and opposed to μαλακία, an "easy softness of nature," that betrays men into a relinquishment of their duty. And as the verb, καρτερέω, is used sometimes with a dative, sometimes with an accusative case, sometimes with prepositions, πρός, ἐπί, ἐν, sometimes without; so it is also neutrally, without affecting any other persons or things: Καρτερεῖν δὲ χρὴ καὶ ἄλλων παίδων ἐλπίδι, Thucyd., lib. ii. cap. xliv. So that there was no need for the Vulgar to join it unto τὸν ἀόρατον, "invisibilem sustinuit."

Wherefore this enduring by faith, is not a mere bare continuance in duty; but it is an abiding in it with courage and resolution, without fear and despondency.

Obs. III. There is a heroic frame of mind and spiritual fortitude required unto the due discharge of our callings in times of danger, and which faith in exercise will produce: 1 Cor. 16:13, Γρηγορεῖτε, στήκετε ἐν τῇ πίστει, ἀνδρίζεσθε, κραταιοῦσθε.

Τὸν ἀόρατον ὡς ὁρῶν. That which preserved Moses in this frame was, that "he saw him who is invisible." God is said to be invisible (as he is absolutely) in respect of his essence, and is often so called in the Scripture, Rom. 1:20, Col. 1:15, 1 Tim. 1:17; but there is a peculiar reason of this description of him here. Moses was in that state and condition, and had those things to do, wherein he stood in need continually of divine power and assistance. Whence this should proceed, he could not discern by his senses. His bodily eyes could behold no present assistant; for God is invisible. And it requires an especial act of the mind in expecting help from him who cannot be seen. Wherefore this is here ascribed to him. "He saw him who is" in himself "invisible;" that is, he saw him by faith whom he could not see with his eyes. "As seeing," is not, 'as if he saw him,' but

seeing of him really and indeed; only in such a way and by such means as left him still in himself invisible, but represented him a present help no less than if he had been seen.

A double act of the faith of Moses is intended herein: (1.) A clear, distinct view and apprehension of God in his omnipresence, power, and faithfulness. (2.) A fixed trust in him on their account, at all times and on all occasions. This he rested on, this he trusted to, that God was everywhere present with him, able to protect him, and faithful in the discharge of his promise; which is the sum of the revelation he made of himself unto Abraham, Gen. 15:1, 17:1. Hereof he had as certain a persuasion as if he had seen God working with him and for him by his bodily eyes. This sight of God he continually retreated unto in all his hazards and difficulties; and thereon endured courageously unto the end. And,

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Obs. IV. There is nothing insuperable unto faith, whilst it can keep a clear view of the power of God and his faithfulness in his promises.—And unless we are constant in this exercise of faith, we shall faint and fail in great trials and difficult duties. From hence we may fetch revivings, renewals of strength, and consolations on all occasions, as the Scripture everywhere testifieth, Ps. 73:25, 26; Isa. 40:28–31.

Hebrews 11: 28

Πίστει πεποίηκε τὸ πάσχα καὶ τὴν πρόσχυσιν τοῦ αἵματος, ἵνα μὴ ὁ ὀλοθρεύων τὰ πρωτότοκα θίγῃ αὐτῶν.

Πεποίηκε τὸ πάσχα, "he wrought," "he made the passover." So the Syriac, עֲבַד פָּצְחָא. Vulg., "celebravit pascha:" Rhem., "he celebrated the passover." "Fecit," "peregit;" "he performed," "kept." Ἐπασχοποίησε, ἑώρτασε, "he kept the feast."

Καὶ τὴν πρόσχυσιν τοῦ αἵματος. Syr., וְרַסַּס דְּמָא, "and he sprinkled blood." Vulg., "et affusionem sanguinis." Rhem., "and the shedding of the blood;" adhering to a corrupt translation, which took πρόσχυσις for the same with ἔκχυσις, not only against the original, but the plain, express meaning of the Holy Ghost. For it is not the shedding of blood, which was done in the killing of the lamb, but the sprinkling of it on the doors and posts, that is intended. "And that affusion," "pouring on," or "sprinkling of blood."

Ὁ ὀλοθρεύων τὰ πρωτότοκα. Vulg., "qui vastabat primitiva," "he that wasted the firstlings;" which is the best sense that word will bear. The Rhemists render it, "the first-born," "Qui perimebat," "who slew." "Qui destruxit," "who destroyed." הַמַּשְׁחִית, "the destroyer;" ὀλοθρευτής, 1 Cor. 10:10.

Θίγῃ αὐτῶν. Syr., נֶתְקְרַב לְהוּן, "should come nigh them."

Ver. 28.—By faith he kept the passover, and the sprinkling of blood, lest he that destroyed the first-born should touch them; [or, that sprinkling of blood, that the destroyer of the first-born should not touch them.]

The story which the apostle hath respect unto is recorded at large, Exod. 12; which it doth not appertain unto us here to insist upon.

There are two things in the words: 1. The commendation of the faith of Moses, from the due observation of a double divine ordinance of worship. The one whereof was to be standing, and of perpetual use in the church, namely, the passover: the other was temporary, suited unto that season only, namely, the sprinkling of blood; or it may be esteemed a temporary addition unto the other. 2. The effect or consequent of his faith, in the observance of these ordinances, whereof they were a sign; "that he who destroyed," etc.

Πεποίηκε. 1. The first thing ascribed unto him as the fruit of his faith, is, that "he kept the passover." The word used (πεποίηκε) is of a large signification. We render it, "he kept." But that doth not comprise its whole sense: for it refers no less to the sprinkling of blood than to the passover; and it is not proper to say, he kept the sprinkling of blood. He "wrought," he "performed" the whole sacred duty; that is, of killing the passover and sprinkling the blood.

Τὸ πάσχα. The "passover." The Greeks call it πάσχα, "pascha;" which some would derive from πάσχειν, "to suffer," because the lamb suffered when it was slain;—very foolishly; for the word is of a Hebrew original, only used by the Greeks after the Chaldee dialect, wherein it is usual to add א unto the end of words. So of the Hebrew פֶּסַח came the Chaldee פַּסְחָא, and thence the Greek πάσχα. The Hebrew word "pesach" is from פָּסַח, "pasach," to "pass over." Not that "pasàch" doth properly or commonly signify "transire," to "pass over" or away, which is עָבַר; but a peculiar passing over, by a kind of leaping or skipping, taking one thing and leaving another. Hence it is like the going of a lame man, rising up and falling down. And such a one is called פִּסֵּחַ, "piseach," Lev. 21:18, Mal. 1:13; "claudus,"—"one that limpeth." The word was chosen to intimate the

manner of the distinction that God made by the destroying angel between the houses of the Egyptians and the Israelites, when he passed over one untouched, and entered into another, it may be next unto it, with death.

Sundry things did the faith of Moses respect in his keeping or observance of the passover: (1.) Its institution. (2.) The command for its observation. (3.) Its sacramental nature, wherein a divine promise was included. (4.) Its mystical or typical signification.

(1.) He had respect unto the original institution of this ordinance, which he had by divine revelation. God revealed unto him the ordinance itself, with all its rites and ceremonies; which was its institution. And this faith respects in the first place; nor will it move or act towards any thing in the worship of God but what it hath the warranty of divine institution for. This is recorded Exod. 12:1–4, etc.

(2.) Unto the command for its perpetual observance, which he was then to initiate the people into, verse 14: "Ye shall keep it a feast unto the LORD throughout your generations; ye shall keep it a feast by an ordinance for ever." For although divine institution be a sufficient warranty for the observance of any thing in the worship of God, yet, to secure and encourage our faith, God did always confirm it by a command of obedience. So our Lord Jesus Christ did not only institute the ordinance of the holy supper, but commanded all his disciples to observe it in the remembrance of him. And with respect hereunto did the faith of Moses work in the way of obedience. And an active obedience unto the authority of Christ in his commands is expressly required in all that we do in divine worship.

(3.) He had respect by faith unto the sacramental nature of it, wherein the promise was included. For this is in the nature of sacraments, that in and by a visible pledge they contain a promise, and exhibit the thing promised unto them that believe. This is expressed Exod. 12:11, where, speaking of the lamb to be slain and eaten, with all its rites and ceremonies, God adds, "It is the LORD'S passover;" where the application of the name of the thing signified unto the sacramental sign of it is consecrated unto the use of the church. So was it taken for granted by our Saviour in the institution of the sacrament of his supper, when he says of the bread and wine that they are his body and blood; applying the names of the things signified unto those which were appointed signs of them by divine institution. And herein was the promise inwrapped and contained of the deliverance of the people; which was exemplified and

represented unto their faith in all the rites and circumstances of it. And the accomplishment of this promise was that which they were obliged to instruct their children and posterity in, as the reason of keeping this divine service, verses 24–27.

(4.) He had respect unto the mystical or typical signification of it. For what Moses did of this kind, it was "for a testimony of those things which were afterwards to be declared," Heb. 3:5. See the exposition. And those testimonies of Moses concerning Christ, which are so frequently appealed unto in the New Testament, consist more in what he did than in what he said. For all his institutions were representations of him, and so testimonies unto him. And this of the paschal lamb was one of the most illustrious types of his office. Hence the apostle expressly calls Christ "our passover:" "Christ our passover is sacrificed for us," 1 Cor. 5:7. He in his sacrifice was that really and substantially, whereof the paschal lamb was a type, sign, and shadow. And it may not be a useless diversion to name some of those things wherein the typical relation between Christ in his sacrifice, and the paschal lamb or passover, did consist; as,—

[1.] It was a lamb that was the matter of this ordinance, Exod. 12:3; and in allusion hereunto, as also unto other sacrifices that were instituted afterwards, Christ is called "the Lamb of God," John 1:29. [2.] This lamb was to be taken out from the flock of the sheep, verse 5: so was the Lord Christ to be taken out of the flock of the church of mankind, in his participation of our nature, that he might be a meet sacrifice for us, Heb. 2:14–17. [3.] This lamb, being taken from the flock, was to be shut up separate from it, verse 6: so although the Lord Christ was taken from amongst men, yet he was "separate from sinners," Heb. 7:26; that is, absolutely free from all that contagion of sin which others are infected withal. [4.] This lamb was to be without blemish, verse 5; which is applied unto the Lord Christ, 1 Pet. 1:19, "A Lamb without blemish, and without spot." [5.] This lamb was to be slain, and was slain accordingly, verse 6: so was Christ slain for us; "the Lamb," in the efficacy of his death, "slain from the foundation of the world," Rev. 13:8. [6.] This lamb was so slain as that it was a sacrifice, verse 27,—"It is the sacrifice of the LORD'S passover;" and "Christ our passover was sacrificed for us," 1 Cor. 5:7. [7.] The lamb being slain, was to be roasted, verses 8, 9; which signified the fiery wrath that Christ was to undergo for our deliverance. [8.] That not a bone of him should be broken, verse 46, was expressly to declare the manner of the death of Christ, John 19:33–36. [9.] The eating of him, which was also enjoined, and that wholly and entirely, verses 8,

9, was to instruct the church in the spiritual food of the flesh and blood of Christ, in the communication of the fruits of his mediation unto us by faith. And sundry other things of the same nature might be observed.

With respect unto all these things did Moses by faith keep the passover. And,

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Obs. I. There is always an especial exercise of faith required unto the due observation of a sacramental ordinance.

Τὴν πρόσχυσιν τοῦ αἵματος. 2. The second thing ascribed unto the faith of Moses is, "the sprinkling of blood." This, whether it was a peculiar, temporary ordinance, or an observation annexed unto the first celebration of the passover, is all to the same purpose. That it was not afterwards repeated is evident, not only from hence, that it is nowhere mentioned as observed, but principally because the ground and reason of it did utterly cease. And God will not have any empty signs or ceremonies in his worship, that should be of no signification. However, that first signification that it had was of constant use in the church, as unto the faith of believers. The institution is recorded, Exod. 12:7. The blood of the lamb when it was slain was preserved in a bason; from whence they were to take it by dipping a bunch of hyssop into it, verse 22, and strike it on the two side-posts and the upper door-post of their houses. And this was to be a token unto them that God would pass over the houses that were so sprinkled and marked with blood, that none should be destroyed in them, verse 13. And this was to abide for ever in its mystical signification, as the present use of it is declared in the next words by the apostle. But unto this day we are hence taught,

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Obs. II. That whatever is not sprinkled with the blood of Christ, the Lamb of God who was slain and sacrificed for us, is exposed unto destruction from the anger and displeasure of God. As also,—

Obs. III. That this alone is that which gives us security from him that had the power of death. See the exposition on chap. 2:14, 15.

Lastly, The end of this institution was, "that he who destroyed the first-born might not touch them."

(1.) The agent employed in this work was ὁ ὀλοθρεύων or ὀλοθρευτής, 1 Cor. 10:10; "the destroyer;"—that is, an angel whom God employed in that work, as the executioner of his judgments; as he did one afterwards in the destruction of Sennacherib's army, as before in that of Sodom. There is therefore no reason to think, with some of the Jews, that it was an evil angel whom they call אשמודי,

"Ashmodaeus," in the Book of Tobit; and usually מַלְאַךְ הַמָּוֶת, "the angel of death;" or "him that had the power of death, that is, the devil." For there is no work more holy, nor more becoming the holy ministering spirits, than to execute the judgments of God on impenitent sinners. I do grant, that in the infliction of the plagues on the Egyptians in general, especially in the work of hardening their hearts, and seducing them, unto their deserved destruction, God did make use of the activity of evil angels unto such ends; for so the psalmist affirms, "He sent evil angels among them," Ps. 78:49; but this work of slaying their first-born is so peculiarly and frequently ascribed unto God himself, that I rather judge he employed a good angel therein. And,—

Obs. IV. God hath always instruments in readiness to execute the severest of his judgments on sinners, in their greatest security.—They were all in their midnight sleep in Egypt, when this messenger of death came amongst them. And,—

(2.) "He destroyed the first-born;" τὰ πρωτότοκα, in the neuter gender,—that is, γεννήματα. For the destruction was extended unto the first-born of beasts as well as of men, Exod. 12:29. And this was done at the same time throughout all the land of Egypt; that is, about midnight, chap. 11:4, 12:29, 30.

Obs. V. Such is the great power and activity of these fiery ministering spirits, that in the shortest space of time imaginable they can execute the judgments of God on whole nations, as well and as easily as on private persons, 2 Kings 19:35.

The close of the words gives us the use of the sprinkling of blood on the posts of the door, namely, that it might be a sign and token unto the Israelites that they should be preserved from that woful destruction which they knew would that night befall the Egyptians: Exod. 12:13, "The blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are." And what is added, that when he did see the blood he would pass over them, and the plague should not come nigh them, was only to oblige them with all diligence and reverence to observe his sacred institution; for their deliverance was suspended on the condition thereof, and had they failed therein, any of them, they had perished with the Egyptians.

Μὴ θίγῃ αὐτῶν. "Should not touch them;" that is, the Israelites and their cattle. For although they are not mentioned before, yet are they necessarily understood. And it is thus expressed, "Not touch them," to declare the absolute security which they were to enjoy whilst the Egyptians were smitten. The destroyer made no approach unto their houses; they had no fear of him. So, not

to touch is used for the same with doing no harm, or being remote from it: Ps. 105:15, "Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm." 1 John 5:18, "The wicked one toucheth him not."

Obs. VI. That which God would for ever instruct the church in by this ordinance is, that unless we are sprinkled with the blood of Christ, our paschal Lamb, no other privilege can secure us from eternal destruction.—Though a man had been really an Israelite, and had with others made himself ready that night for a departure, which was a high profession of faith, yet if the lintel and posts of his door had not been sprinkled with blood, he would have been destroyed. And on the other hand, where there is this sprinkling of blood, be the danger never so great or so near, there shall be certain deliverance. "The blood of sprinkling speaks better things than the blood of Abel."

Hebrews 11: 29

Having fixed the foundation and beginning of the deliverance of the church on the exercise of faith in the observance of the holy institutions of divine worship, prescribed to be the signs and tokens thereof, the apostle proceeds to give an instance in one of the most remarkable passages of divine providence that befell them in the way of their deliverance.

Ver. 29.—Πίστει διέβησαν τὴν Ἐρυθρὰν θάλασσαν, ὡς διὰ ξηρᾶς· ἧς πεῖραν λαβόντες οἱ Αἰγύπτιοι, κατεπόθησαν.

Τὴν Ἐρυθρὰν θάλασσαν. The Syriac retains the Hebrew name, יַמָּא דְסוּף, "the Reedy Sea," the sea of reeds or canes, as this sea is called constantly in the Scripture.

Πεῖραν λαβόντες. Vulg., "experti," "making a trial." "Periculo facto," "venturing to do;" as we, "assaying." Syr., כַּד אַמְרַחוּ עֲלוֹהִי, "when they durst," or emboldened themselves "to enter it."

Κατεπόθησαν, "devorati sunt." Vulg. Lat., "absorpti sunt." Syr., properly, "were swallowed up," overwhelmed, drowned, suffocated.

Ver. 29.—By faith they passed through the Red Sea as by dry [land:] which the Egyptians assaying, [making a trial of,] were drowned, [or swallowed up.]

A greater instance with respect unto the work of divine Providence, of the power of faith on the one hand, and of unbelief with obdurate presumption on the other, there is not on record in the whole Book of God.

Here we have the end and issue of the long controversy that was between those two people, the Egyptians and the Israelites;—a certain type and evidence of what will be the last end of the contest between the world and the church. Their long conflict shall end in the utter destruction of the one, and the complete salvation of the other.

Διέβησαν. 1. The persons whose faith is here commended are included in that word, they passed; that is, the whole congregation of the Israelites, under the conduct of Moses, Exod. 14. And the whole is denominated from the better part; for many of them were not believers in state, unto the sanctification of their persons. For "with many of them," as the apostle speaks, "God was not well pleased," though they were "all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea," 1 Cor. 10:2, 5. But in a professing society, God is pleased to impute the faith and obedience of some unto the whole; as, on the other hand, judgments do oftentimes befall the whole for the provocations of some, as it frequently happened unto that people in the wilderness. It is therefore the duty of every man in church society to endeavour, on the one hand, the good of the whole in his own personal faith and obedience; as also, on the other, to keep them in what lies in him from sin, that he fall not with them under the displeasure of God.

2. Their faith wrought in their passing through the sea: not in dividing of the waters,—that was an act of immediate almighty power; but by faith they passed through when they were divided. It is true that God commanded Moses to divide the sea, Exod. 14:16; but this was only ministerially, in giving a sign thereof by stretching forth his rod, verse 21. And concerning their passage by faith some things may be observed.

Τὴν Ἐρυθρὰν θαλασσαν. (1.) It was the Red Sea that they passed through; that part of the Ethiopic Ocean which lieth between Egypt and Arabia. In the Hebrew it is constantly called יַם־סוּף, "the Sea of Sedges," reeds or canes, from the multitude of them growing on its shore; as it is unto this day. The Greeks call it Ἐρυθραῖος or Ἐρυθρά, the word here used by the apostle. And it was so called, not from the red colour of the waters, appearing so from the sand or the sun, as some have fancied, but from a king whom they called Erythraeus; that is, Esau, or Edom, who fixed his habitation and rule towards this sea. For whereas that name signifies "red," they gave him a name of the same signification in their language. Thence came the sea among them to be called the "Red Sea," which the Hebrews called "Yam Suph."

(2.) This sea they passed through from the Egyptian unto the Arabic shore. For what some have imagined, that they entered into the sea, and, making a semicircle, came out again on the same side, leaving Pharaoh and his host drowned behind them, is inconsistent with the narrative of Moses, that they passed through the sea. Nor is there any countenance given hereunto from what is affirmed, Num. 33:6–8, namely, that before they entered the sea they pitched in Etham, and that after they had passed through the midst of it, they went three days' journey in the wilderness of Etham. For all that tract of land wherein the Red Sea issues and ends, from which end of it they were not far remote, belonged unto the wilderness of Etham both on the one side of the sea and the other, as is evident in the story.

Ὡς διὰ ξηρῶς. (3.) It is said that they passed through as on dry land, Exod. 14:21, 22, 29. Some think that the bottom of the sea being sand, was fit and meet to go upon, on the mere separation of the waters; others, that this was the effect of the mighty wind which God also used in the dividing of the waters, though he put forth in it an act of his almighty power. See Isa. 63:11–13. For no wind of itself could produce that effect, much less keep the parted waters standing like walls; yet it is said directly that the east wind made the sea dry land, Exod 14:21, 22. However it was, the ground was made fit and meet for them to travel on, and pass through the waters without difficulty or impediment.

(4.) The division of the waters was very great, leaving a space for so great a multitude to pass orderly between the divided parts, perhaps unto the distance of some miles. And their passage is judged to have been six leagues from the one shore unto the other; by some much more.

(5.) The Israelites had light to discern this state of things; and no doubt the appearance of it was very dreadful. The waters must of necessity be raised unto a very great height on each side of them; and although they were, and proved, by the power of God, a wall unto them on the right hand and on the left, yet was it in them a high act of faith to put themselves between such walls, as were ready in their own nature to fall on them unto their destruction every moment, abiding only under an almighty restraint. But they had the command and promise of God for their warranty and security, which will enable faith to overcome all fears and dangers.

(6.) I doubt not but that Moses first entered himself at the head of them. Hence it is said that God led them through the sea by the right hand of Moses, Isa. 63:11–13;—he entering before them into the channel of the deep to guide

and encourage them. Some of the Jews say that this was done by Amminadib, captain of the host of Judah, who, when all the rest of the people were afraid, first entered, with his tribe; whence mention is made of "the chariots of Amminadib," Cant. 6:12. But, alas! they had neither chariot nor horse with them, but went all on foot.

From all these difficulties and dangers we may observe,—

Obs. I. Where God engageth his word and promise, there is nothing so difficult, nothing so remote from the rational apprehensions of men, but he may righteously require our faith and trust in him therein. Whatever almighty power can extend unto, is a proper object for faith; in reliance whereon it shall never fail.

Obs. II. Faith will find a way through a sea of difficulties, under the call of God.

Obs. III. There is no trial, no difficulty, that the church can be called unto, but there are examples on record of the power of faith in working out its deliverance.—There can be no greater strait than the Israelites were in, between the host of the Egyptians and the Red Sea.

3. It remains that we consider the other people, with what they did on this occasion, and what end they came unto.

Οἱ Αἰγύπτιοι. The people were "the Egyptians." So they are called here in general. But in the account given us by Moses, it appears that Pharaoh himself, the king, was there present in person, with all the nobility and power of his kingdom. It was he in an especial manner whom God had undertaken to deal withal; yea, he raised him up for this very purpose, that he might show his power in him, and that his name thereby might be declared throughout the earth, Exod. 9:16, Rom. 9:17. Accordingly, he carried it for a long time with intolerable pride and obstinacy. Hence the contest betwixt God and him, with the issue of it, was so famous in the world that the glory of God was exceedingly exalted thereby; and the terror of it made way for the people in their entrance into Canaan, the hearts of the inhabitants failing because of them. Here the contest came to an issue, in the utter ruin of the proud tyrant. For there is none so great, so proud, so obstinate, but if God undertake to deal with them, he will be victorious in the end. See Exod. 15:3–10.

Πεῖραν λαβόντες. This Pharaoh with his Egyptians (that is, his whole army, horses, and chariots) "assayed to do" what they saw the children of Israel do before them; namely, to pass through the sea whilst the waters of it were

divided. And this was the greatest height that ever obdurate infidels could rise unto in this world. They had seen all the mighty works which God had wrought in the behalf of his people among them,—they and their country were almost consumed with the plagues and judgments that were inflicted on them on their account; and yet now, beholding this wonderful work of God in opening the sea to receive them from their pursuit, they would make a venture, as the word signifies, to follow them into it.

Now, although this presumptuous attempt of the Egyptians be to be resolved into that judiciary hardness which was upon them from God, that they might be destroyed, yet no doubt but some things did occur to their minds that might lead them unto the hardening of themselves; as, (1.) That they might not know for a while that they were entered into the channel of the sea, the waters being removed far from them; but they might go on perhaps in the night, without once thinking that the people whom they pursued were gone into the midst of the sea. (2.) When they discovered any thing extraordinary therein, they might suppose it was only by some extraordinary natural cause or occasion; of which sort many things fall out in the ebbing and flowing of the sea. But, (3.) That which principally animated them was, that they were continually near or close upon the Israelites, ready to seize on them; as is evident in the story. And they did perfectly believe that they should fare as well as they. And for this reason it was that God began to disturb them in their passage, that they should not overtake the people, but abide in the sea unto their ruin.

But however these and the like considerations might serve to blind their minds in some measure, that they should forget all former instances of divine severity against them in the same cause, and not discern the imminent destruction that was prepared for them, the principal cause from whence they precipitated themselves into the punishment which they had deserved was the efficacy of that blindness and hardness of heart wherewith they were plagued of God. And herein, as was said, we have the most signal example and instance of the power of unbelief, confirmed by judiciary hardness of heart, that is upon record in the whole book of God; nor doth any monument of an equal folly and blindness remain among other memorials of things done in this world. And we may observe, that,—

Obs. IV. God knows how to secure impenitent sinners unto their appointed destruction, by giving them up unto hardness of heart, and an obstinate continuance in their sins, against all warnings and means of repentance.—The devils are reserved for judgment under the chains of their own darkness. See Rom. 1:24, 28, 29.

Obs. V. God doth not give up any in a judiciary way unto sin, but it is a punishment for preceding sins, and as a means to bring on them total ruin and destruction.

Obs. VI. Let us not wonder that we see men in the world obstinate in foolish counsels and undertakings, tending unto their own inevitable ruin, seeing probably they are under judiciary hardness from God, Isa. 6:9, 10, 29:10, 19:11–14.

Obs. VII. There is no such blinding, hardening lust in the minds or hearts of men, as hatred of the people of God and desire of their ruin.—Where this prevails, as it did in these persecuting Egyptians, it deprives men of all wisdom and understanding, that they shall do things against all rules of reason and policy, (which commonly they pretend unto,) brutishly and obstinately, though apparently tending unto their own ruin and destruction. So it was with these Egyptians; for although they designed the utter extirpation of the people, that they should be no more in the world,—which they attempted in the law for the destruction of all the male children, which in one age would have totally exterminated them out of Egypt,—yet now they will run themselves on imminent, universal destruction, to bring them back again into Egypt.

Obs. VIII. When the oppressors of the church are nearest unto their ruin they commonly rage most, and are most obstinate in their bloody persecutions.—So is it at this day among the anti-Christian enemies of the church; for notwithstanding all their pride and fury, they seem to be entering into the Red Sea.

Κατεπόθησαν. Lastly; The event of this essay or undertaking of the Egyptians, was, that they "were drowned," they were swallowed up. The account hereof is given us so gloriously in the triumphant song of Moses, Exod. 15, that nothing needs to be added in its further illustration. And this destruction of the Egyptians, with the deliverance of Israel thereby, was a type and pledge of the victory and triumph which the church shall have over its antichristian adversaries, Rev. 15:2–4.

Hebrews 11: 30

In this verse the apostle adds another instance of the faith of the whole congregation, in the sense before declared; for although respect no doubt be had unto the faith of Joshua in an especial manner, yet that of the whole people is expressed.

Ver. 30.—Πίστει τὰ τείχη Ἰεριχὼ ἔπεσε, κυκλωθέντα ἐπὶ ἑπτὰ ἡμέρας.

Ver. 30.—By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed about seven days.

The apostle in these words gives us a compendium of the history of the taking and destruction of Jericho, which is at large recorded in the sixth chapter of the Book of Joshua, with what was spoken before concerning the spies, in the second chapter. I shall not need to report the story, it is so well known. Only I shall observe some few things, wherein the faith of the people did concur unto this great work of divine Providence, when I have a little opened the words.

Τὰ τείχη. The thing ascribed unto their faith, is the fall of "the walls of Jericho." The city itself was not great, as is evident, because the whole army of the Israelites did compass it seven times in one day. But most probably it was fortified and encompassed with walls of great height and strength; with which the spies sent by Moses out of the wilderness were terrified, Num. 13:28. And in all probability the Israelites were destitute of any engines of war for the casting of them down, or making a breach in them. And because the Jung of the place neither endeavoured to hinder the passage of the Israelites over Jordan, which was but a few miles from the city, when he knew that they designed his destruction; nor did once attempt to oppose them in the field before they sat down about the town, as did the men of Ai; it is probable that he placed his confidence in the strength of the walls and their fortifications. And it is uncertain how long it was besieged by the Israelites before God showed unto them the way of demolishing these walls; for the town was beleaguered by Joshua it may be for some good while before he had the command to compass it, Josh. 6:1.

Ἔπεσε. These walls, saith the apostle, "fell down." They did so unto the very ground. This is signified in that expression, וְתִפֹּל הַחוֹמָה תַּחְתֶּיהָ, Josh. 6:20; —"And the wall fell down under it." Which, although it doth not prove that the wall sunk into the ground, as some of the Hebrews judge, (yea, that notion is inconsistent with the words whereby its fall is expressed,) yet it intimates the utter casting it down flat on the earth, whereby the people went over it with ease

into the city. And therefore this fall was not by a breach in any part of the wall, but by the dejection of the whole. For the people being round about the city when it fell, did not go from one place unto another to seek for an entrance, but "went up into the city, every one straight before him," in the place where he was; which utterly deprived the inhabitants of all advantages of defence. Yet need not this be so far extended as that no part nor parcel of the wall was left standing, where the fall of it was not of any advantage unto the Israelites. So that part of it whereon the house of Rahab was built was left standing; for in the fall of it she and all that were with her must have been destroyed. But the fall was such as took away all defence from the inhabitants, and facilitated the entrance of the Israelites in all places at once.

Ἐπὶ ἑπτὰ ἡμέρας. This, saith the apostle, was done "after they were compassed about seven days." "Compassed about;" that is, by the army of the Israelites marching round the town in the order described, Josh. 6:2, 3, etc. And this was done "seven days." The first command of God was to have it done six times in the space of six days, verse 3; but an especial command and direction was given for that of the seventh day, because it was then to be done seven times, verse 4. This seventh day probably was the Sabbath. And somewhat of mystery is no doubt intimated in the number of seven in this place. For there were to be seven priests going before the people, having seven trumpets of rams' horns to sound with; and the order was to be observed seven days, and on the seventh day the city was to be compassed seven times,—which thing was of divine designation. The reader may, if he please, consult our discourse of the original and institution of the Sabbath, wherein these things are spoken unto. The apostle takes no notice of the compassing it seven times on the seventh day, but only of its being compassed seven days. And some things there are wherein the Israelites did manifest their faith herein.

1. It was on the command of God, and his promise of success therein, that they now entered the land of Canaan, and began their work and war with the siege of this strong town, not having by any previous fight weakened the inhabitants. Here they made the first experiment of the presence of God with them in the accomplishment of the promise made to Abraham.

2. They did so in their readiness to comply with the way prescribed unto them, of compassing the town so many days with the noise of trumpets, without the least attempt to possess themselves of it. For, without a respect by faith unto the command and promise of God, this act was so far from furthering them in their design, that it was suited to expose them to the scorn

and contempt of their adversaries. For what could they think of them, but as of a company of men who desired indeed to possess themselves of their city, but knew not how to do it, or durst not undertake it? But this way was prescribed unto them of God, to give them a distinct apprehension that the work of the conquest of Canaan was his, and not theirs. For although he required of them therein to use the utmost of their courage, prudence, and diligence, yet he had taken upon himself the effecting the work itself, as if they had contributed nothing thereunto. And the compassing of the city once every day for the space of six days, and the entrance into it on the seventh, had respect unto the work of the creation. For God was now entering into his rest with respect unto his worship, in a new way of settlement and solemnity, such as he had not erected or made use of from the beginning of the world. Hence he frequently calls it his rest, as hath been declared in the exposition on the fourth chapter, Ps. 95:11, 132:8, 14; Heb. 3:11, 4:3, 11. And it was a type of the new creation, with the rest of Christ thereon, and of believers in him. Therefore would God give here a resemblance of that first work in the labour of the six days, and the reward they received on the seventh. Besides, hereby he took possession as it were of the city for himself, not intending to allow the people any share in the spoil of it; for it was wholly devoted.

3. In the triumphant shout they gave, before the walls stirred or moved. They used the sign of their downfall before the thing signified was accomplished; and triumphed by faith in the ruin of the walls, whilst they stood in their full strength.

Wherefore the apostle might justly commend their faith, which was acted against so many difficulties, in the use of unlikely means, with a constancy and persistency unto the time and event designed. For,—

Obs. I. Faith will embrace and make use of means divinely prescribed, though it be not able to discern the effective influence of them unto the end aimed at.—On this consideration was Naaman induced to wash himself in the waters of Jordan for the cure of his leprosy, 2 Kings 5:13, 14.

Obs. II. Faith will cast down walls and strong towers, that lie in the way of the work of God.—It is true, we have no stone walls to demolish, nor cities to destroy: but the same faith in exercise is required of us in all our concerns as was in Joshua when he entered on the conquest of Canaan; as the apostle declares, Heb. 13:5. And there are strongholds of sin in our minds, which nothing but faith can cast to the ground.

Hebrews 11: 31

Hitherto we have had the examples of men, with one woman only, in conjunction with her husband. In this verse the apostle puts a close unto his particular instances in that of one single woman, accompanied with many eminent circumstances, as we shall see.

Ver. 31.—Πίστει Ραὰβ ἡ πόρνη οὐ συναπώλετο τοῖς ἀπειθήσασι δεξαμένη τοὺς κατασκόπους μετ᾽ εἰρήνης.

Ver. 31.—By faith Rahab the harlot perished not with them that believed not, [or were disobedient,] when she had received the spies with peace.

The story concerning this Rahab, her faith and works, is at large recorded in the second and sixth chapters of Joshua. What concerns the exposition of these words, and the great instance of the grace of God and efficacy of faith in them, may be comprised in some observations; as,—

Ραάβ. 1. This Rahab was by nature a Gentile, an alien from the stock and covenant of Abraham. Wherefore, as her conversion unto God was an act of free grace and mercy in a peculiar manner, so it was a type and pledge of calling a church from among the Gentiles; as they all were who were converted unto God after the outward confinement of the promise unto the family of Abraham by the covenant and the token thereof.

2. She was not only a Gentile, but an Amorite; of that race and seed which in general was devoted unto utter destruction. She was therefore an instance of God's sovereignty in dispensing with his positive laws as it seems good unto him; for of his own mere pleasure he exempted her from the doom denounced against all those of her original and traduction.

Ἡ πόρνη. 3. She was a harlot; that is, one who for advantage exposed her person in fornication. For what the Jews say, that זוֹנָה signifies also a "victualler," or one that kept a house for public entertainment, they can prove by no instance in the Scripture, the word being constantly used for a harlot; and she being twice in the New Testament, where she is highly commended, called expressly πόρνη, which is capable of no such signification, it must be granted that she was a harlot, though, it may be, not one that did commonly and promiscuously expose herself: הַזּוֹנָה, "nobile scortum." But that also she kept a public house of entertainment is evident from the spies going thither; which they did as into such a house, and not as into a mere stew. And herein have we a blessed instance both of the sovereignty of God's grace and of its power;—of its freedom and sovereignty, in the calling and conversion of a person given up by

her own choice to the vilest of sins; and of its power, in the conversion of one engaged in the serving of that lust, and the habitual course of that kind of sin, which of all others is the most effectual in detaining persons under its power. But nothing, no person, no sin, is to be despaired of, in whose cure sovereign, almighty grace is engaged, 1 Cor. 6:9–11.

Τοῖς ἀπειθήσασι. 4. She was converted unto God before the coming of the spies unto her, by what she had heard of him, his mighty works and his peculiar owning of the people of Israel. For God had ordained and designed that the report of these things should be an effectual ordinance, as to terrify obstinate unbelievers, so to call others to repentance and to conversion from their idols; unto which end, no doubt, it was effectual on others as well as on Rahab,—as it was on the Gibeonites in general. For he declares that he did, and would do, such things to make his power known and his name exalted, that others might know that he alone was God, and that by grace he had taken Israel to be his people. Hence those who perished are said to be unbelievers: "She perished not with them that believed not," or "who were disobedient." For they had a sufficient revelation of God and his will to render their faith and obedience necessary, as we shall see in the account that Rahab gives of herself; the things whereof were known to them as well as unto her, and that by the same means. And had they believed and repented, they might have been saved. For although this, as unto the event, could not be with respect unto entire nations (although their lives also might have been spared, had they, according to their duty, sought peace with Israel on God's terms), yet multitudes of individuals might have been saved who perished in their unbelief. Wherefore, although their destruction was just, upon the account of their former sins and provocations, yet the next cause why they were not spared was their unbelief. And therefore are they so described here by the apostle, "Those who believed not." And their destruction is ascribed unto the hardening of their hearts, so as that they should not make peace with Israel, Josh. 11:19, 20. Wherefore,—

Obs. I. Although unbelief be not the only destroying sin (for the wages of every sin is death, and many are accompanied with peculiar provocations), yet it is the only sin which makes eternal destruction inevitable and remediless. And,

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Obs. II. Where there are means granted of the revelation of God and his will, it is unbelief that is the greatest and most provoking sin, and from whence God is glorified in his severest judgments.—Therefore the apostle, mentioning the destruction of the Canaanites, passeth by their other sins, and represents them as obstinate unbelievers. And,—

Obs. III. Where this revelation of the mind and will of God is most open, full, and evident, and the means of it are most express, and suited unto the communication of the knowledge of it, there is the highest aggravation of unbelief.—If the inhabitants of Jericho perished in their unbelief, because they believed not on the report that was brought unto them of the mighty works of God, what will be the end of them who live and die in their unbelief under the daily, constant preaching of the gospel, the most glorious revelation of the mind and will of God for the salvation of men! Heb. 2:3.

Obs. IV. Every thing which God designs as an ordinance to bring men unto repentance, ought to be diligently attended unto and complied withal, seeing its neglect, or of the call of God therein, shall be severely avenged.—Such were his mighty works in those days; and such are his judgments in all ages.

5. Rahab, upon the first opportunity, made an excellent confession of her faith, and of the means of her conversion to God. This confession is recorded at large, Josh. 2:9–11. She avows the Lord Jehovah to be the only "God in heaven above, and in earth beneath;" wherein she renounced all the idols which before she had worshipped, verse 11. And she avows her faith in him as their God, or the God of Israel, who had taken them to be his people by promise and covenant; which in this confession she lays hold on by faith; "The LORD your God, he is God." And she declares the means of her conversion; which was her hearing of the mighty works of God, and what he did for his people, verse 10. And she adds moreover the way and means whereby her faith was confirmed, namely, her observation of the effect which the report of these things had upon the minds and hearts of her wicked countrymen: 'Their hearts hereon did melt, and they had no more courage left in them,' verse 11. As she had an experience of the divine power of grace in producing a contrary effect in her, namely, that of faith and obedience; so she plainly saw that there was a hand of God in that dread, terror, and fear, which fell upon her countrymen. Their hearts did melt, faint, fall down: and it is an infallible rule in all affairs, especially in war, "Qui animis cadunt, excidunt omnibus rebus bonis;"—"They that fall in their hearts and spirits, fall from every thing that is good, useful, or helpful." By the

observation hereof was her faith confirmed. So, on the first occasion after her conversion, she witnessed a good confession. Hereby the rule is confirmed which we have, Rom. 10:10.

Obs. V. It is in the nature of true, real, saving faith, immediately, or at its first opportunity, to declare and protest itself in confession before men; or confession is absolutely inseparable from faith.—Where men, on some light and convictions, do suppose themselves to have faith, yet through fear or shame do not come up to the ways of expressing it in confession prescribed in the Scripture, their religion is in vain. And therefore our Lord Jesus Christ, in the Gospel, doth constantly lay the same weight on confession as on believing itself, Matt. 10:33; Luke 9:26. And "the fearful,"—that is, those who flee from public profession in times of danger and persecution,—shall be no less assuredly excluded from the heavenly Jerusalem than unbelievers themselves, Rev. 21:8.

6. She separated herself from the cause and interest of her own people among whom she lived, and joined herself unto the cause and interest of the people of God. This also is a necessary fruit of faith, and an inseparable concomitant of profession. This God called her unto, this she complied withal, and this was that which rendered all that she did, in receiving, concealing, and preserving the spies, though they came in order unto the destruction of her country and people, just and warrantable. For although men may not leave the cause and interest of their own people to join with their enemies on light grounds or reasons, since the light of nature itself manifesteth how many obligations there are on us to seek the good of our own country, yet where the persons whereof it consists are obstinate idolaters, and the cause wherein they are engaged is wicked, and in direct opposition unto God, there a universal separation from them in interest, and a conjunction with their enemies, is a duty, honourable and just, as it was in her. Wherefore, although it may seem something hard, that she, being born and living in the town, a citizen of it, and subject of the king, should studiously and industriously receive, conceal, give intelligence unto, and convey away in safety, spies that came to find out a way for the total destruction of the place; yet she, on the call and command of God, having renounced an interest in and relation unto that wicked, idolatrous, unbelieving people, whom she knew to be devoted to utter destruction, it was just and righteous in her to be assisting unto their enemies.

Obs. VI. This separation from the cause and interest of the world is required in all believers, and will accompany true faith wherever it be.—I speak not of the differences that may fall out between nations, and the conjunction in

counsel and action with one people against another; for in such cases we cannot desert our own country without perfidious treachery, unless warranted by such extraordinary circumstances as Rahab was under: but I intend that wicked, carnal interest of the world, and its corrupt conversation, which all believers are obliged visibly to separate themselves from, as a necessary part of their profession.

Δεξαμένη τοὺς κατασκόπους μετ᾽ εἰρήνης. 7. She showed, testified, manifested her faith by her works. She "received the spies with peace." In these few words doth the apostle comprise the whole story of her receiving of them, her studious concealing them, the intelligence she gave them, the prudence she used, the pains she took, and the danger she underwent in the safe conveyance of them to their army; all which are at large recorded, Josh. 2. This work of hers is celebrated there, and also James 2, as an eminent fruit and demonstration of that faith whereby she was justified. And so it was. That it was in itself lawful, just, and good, hath been declared. For what is not so cannot be rendered so to be on any other consideration. Again, it was a work of great use and importance to the church and cause of God. For had these spies been taken and slain, it would have put a great discouragement on the whole people, and made them question whether God would be with them in their undertaking or no. And it is evident that the tidings which they carried unto Joshua and the people, from the intelligence which they had by Rahab, was a mighty encouragement unto them. For they report their discovery in her words. They said unto Joshua, "Truly the LORD hath delivered into our hands all the land; for even all the inhabitants of the country do faint because of us," Josh. 2:24. And it was a work accompanied with the utmost hazard and danger unto herself. Had the matter been discovered, there is no doubt but that she, and all that she had, had been utterly destroyed. And all these things set a great lustre upon this work, whereby she evidenced her faith and her justification thereby.

And as this instance is exceedingly apposite unto the purpose of the apostle, to arm and encourage believers against the difficulties and dangers which they were to meet withal in their profession; so it is sufficient to condemn multitudes among ourselves, who, after a long profession of the truth, are ready to tremble at the first approach of danger, and think it their wisdom to keep at a distance from them that are exposed to danger and sufferings.

Οὐ συναπώλετο. 8. The fruit of this faith of Rahab was, that "she perished not,"—she was not destroyed. The matter of fact is declared, Josh. 6:25, "And Joshua saved Rahab the harlot alive, and her father's household, and all that she

had; and she dwelleth in Israel unto this day." It is good, and sometimes useful, to have relation unto them that believe; as it was with the kindred and household of this Rahab. But what is added of her dwelling in Israel, plainly intimates her solemn conjunction unto the people of God in faith and worship. Yea, I am persuaded that from henceforward she was as eminent in faith and holiness as she had been before in sin and folly; for it was not for her wealth that she was afterwards married unto Salmon the son of Naasson, the prince of the tribe of Judah, Matt. 1:5, coming thereby to have the honour of a place in the genealogy of our blessed Saviour, and of a type of the interest of the Gentiles in his incarnation. The Holy Ghost also, taking occasion twice to mention her in a way of commendation, and proposing her as an example of faith and obedience, gives such an approbation of her as testifies her to have been eminent and exemplary in these things.

And herewith the apostle shuts up his particular instances, proceeding unto a more general summary confirmation of the truth concerning the power and efficacy of faith, which he had undertaken to demonstrate.

Hebrews 11: 32

In this verse, and unto the end of verse 38, he sums up the remaining testimonies which he might further have insisted on in particular; with intimation that there were yet more of the like kind upon record, which he would not so much as name. But he changeth the method which he had hitherto observed. For he doth not single out his witnesses, and ascribe unto each of them distinctly that wherein the exercise of their faith did appear; but he proposeth two things to confirm in general: 1. That faith will do and effect great things of all sorts, when we are called unto them. 2. That it will also enable us to suffer the greatest, the hardest, and most terrible things, which our nature can be exposed unto. And with the instances of this latter sort he closeth his discourse, because they were most peculiarly accommodated to strengthen his especial design: this was, to animate and encourage the Hebrews unto suffering for the gospel; giving them assurance by these examples that faith would carry them victoriously through them all.

Now, whereas he handles these things distinctly, in the proof of the first, or the great things faith will do, first he names the persons in whom it did so of old, and then adds the things which they did; not distributing them particularly to each one by whom they were done, but leaving that to be gathered out of the sacred story. It was sufficient unto his purpose that they were

all to be found amongst them, some performed by some of them, and some by others. And as unto the second, or the great things which faith will enable believers to undergo and suffer, which he enters upon verse 35, he names the things that were suffered, but not the persons that suffered them; because, as I suppose, their names were not recorded in the Scripture, though the things themselves were notoriously known in the church.

And as unto the first we may observe two things: 1. That in the naming of them, Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, and Samuel, he doth not observe the order of time wherein they lived; for Barak was before Gideon, and Jephthah before Samson, and Samuel before David. 2. He doth not reckon up the things they did in the same order wherein he had named the persons; so as that the first thing mentioned should be ascribed unto him that was first named, and so on in order. But he useth his liberty in setting down both the names of the persons and the things ascribed unto them, an exact order and distribution of them no way belonging unto his purpose. Yea, the proposing of the persons with their names at once, and then amassing together the great and mighty fruits of their faith, gives a persuasive efficacy unto the example. Again it must be remarked, that although in the first part he reckoneth up the names of many of them who wrought these works of faith, yet he intimates that there were more of them; and therefore the things which he mentioneth cannot all of them absolutely be accommodated and applied unto the persons named, but some of them were wrought by others whose names he doth not express.

Having given this account of the scope and argument of the apostle, I shall be very brief in the exposition of the particulars.

Ver. 32.—Καὶ τί ἔτι λέγω; Ἐπιλείψει γάρ με διηγούμενον ὁ χρόνος περὶ Γεδεών, Βαράκ τε, καὶ Σαμψών, καὶ Ἰεφθάε, Δαυΐδ τε καὶ Σαμουὴλ, καὶ τῶν προφητῶν.

Ἐπιλείψει γὰρ με Syr., זְעוּר הוּ לִי זַבְנָא דֶּאֶשְׁתַּעֵא, "I have but a little time," or, "there is but a little time for me that I should report:" which is another sense of the words than that in the original, although to the same purpose, it being an excuse of his future brevity, which is not the direct meaning of the phrase. "The time would fail me," is a usual expression with respect unto that wherein we are ready and abound, but repress it for present reasons.

Καὶ τῶν προφητῶν. Syr., וְעַל שַׁרְכָא דַּנְבִיֵא; "and of the rest of the prophets;" which is naturally to be supplied, seeing David and Samuel, the persons last named, were prophets also.

Ver. 32.—And what shall I more say? [what do I say more?] for the time would fail me to tell [declaring, expounding] of Gideon, and [of] Barak, and [of] Samson, and [of] Jephthah; [of] David also, and Samuel, and [of the rest of] the prophets.

The manner of expression used by the apostle is suited unto his transition from insisting on particular instances, when he might have added many more had it been convenient, unto a general summary of what remained of the same kind.

Καὶ τί ἔτι λέγω; 1. He puts a stay unto his own procedure by an interrogation: "And what shall I more say?" or, "Why do I further so speak?" And two things are intimated in this expression: (1.) That he had already sufficiently attested the truth by the examples before insisted on, so as that it needed no further confirmation. Yet, (2.) That, if need were, he had in readiness many more examples of the same kind. And,—

Obs. I. It is requisite prudence, in the confirmation of important truths, as to give them a full proof and demonstration, so not to multiply arguments and testimonies beyond what is necessary, which serves only to divert the mind from attending unto the truth itself to be confirmed.

Ἐπιλείψει γάρ με χρόνος. 2. He gives a reason of the resolution intimated in the preceding interrogation, such as introduceth that new way of procedure which he now designed by a compendium of the faith of others also, whom he judged necessary to mention: "For the time would fail me;" that is, 'it would be a work of that length, as would not be contained within the bounds which I have assigned unto this epistle;'—a usual proverbial speech on the like occasions:

"Ante diem clauso componet vesper Olympo."

Διηγούμενον. 3. By a refusal of treating distinctly and separately of the persons he names,—"The time would fail me treating of them;" that is, 'if I should so declare their faith and the fruits of it in particular as I have done those beforegoing,'—he doth so name them as to bring them in as witnesses in this cause.

As unto the persons whose example he produceth in general, we must inquire into two things: 1. How it doth appear that they did the things in and by faith which are ascribed unto them. 2. How their faith and its efficacy can be an encouragement unto us, who are not called unto any such works and actions as they were engaged in.

1. In answer unto the first inquiry, the things ensuing are to be considered:—

(1.) They all, or most of them, had especial calls from God for and unto the works which they wrought. So had Gideon by an angel, Judges 6; Barak by the prophecy of Deborah, chap. 4; Samson by the direction of an angel unto his parents, chap. 13. So was it also, as is known, with Samuel and David; they had their calls immediately from God. And as for Jephthah, he was at first called and chosen by the people unto his office and work, chap. 11:11; which God approved of, in giving him his Spirit in an extraordinary manner, verse 29. Herein lay the foundation of their acting what they did in faith: They were satisfied in their call from God, and so trusted in him for his aid and assistance.

(2.) The work which they had to do was the work of God, namely, the deliverance of the church from trouble and oppression. This in general was the work of them all; for here is respect had unto all the principal deliverances of the people recorded in the Book of Judges. This work, therefore, they might with confidence, and they did, commit to God by prayer. And herein their faith wrought effectually. Yea, as unto themselves, it is with especial regard hereunto that they are said to do any thing by faith, namely, because by the prayer of faith they prevailed in what they undertook.

(3.) There was a promise annexed unto their works, when undertaken according to the mind of God; yea, many promises unto this purpose were left on record for their encouragement, Deut. 32:30, etc. This promise they rested on by faith in all their undertakings. And thereon what they did effect is rightly ascribed thereunto.

(4.) Some of them, as Gideon, Barak, and David, had particular promises of success in what they were called unto. And although at first they might be slow in the believing of them, as Gideon was, who insisted on multiplied miraculous signs for the confirmation of his faith; or might be shaken in their minds as unto their accomplishment, through the dangers and difficulties which they had to conflict withal, as David was, when he said that "all men were liars," and that he should "one day fall by the hand of Saul;" yet in the issue their faith was victorious, and they "obtained the promises," as it is in the next verse.

On these grounds they wrought all their great works in faith, whereby they engaged the presence of God with them and his assistance of them; and are therefore a meet example to be proposed for our encouragement.

2. But whereas the things which they performed, for the most part, were heroic actions of valour, courage, and strength, in war and battle, such as Christians, as Christians, are not called unto, what can we gather, from what

they were and did, as unto those things and duties which our faith is called unto, that are quite of another nature? But there are sundry things in their example that tend unto our encouragement; as,—

(1.) Whatever their faith was exercised in, yet they were men subject to like passions and infirmities with ourselves. This consideration the apostle James makes use of to stir us up unto prayer, by the example of Elias, whose prayers had a miraculous effect, chap. 5:16–18. Having assured us that "effectual fervent prayer availeth much," he confirms it with the example of the prayer of Elias, who by his prayer shut and opened heaven as to rain. And whereas it might be objected, that we are neither like Elias, nor are our prayers like his, he prevents it, by affirming that "he was a man subject unto like passions as we are." It was not on the account of his person, or the merit of the works which he performed, that his prayer had such success, but of the grace of God in blessing his own institution. And if we apply ourselves unto the same duty, as unto the things that we are called unto, we shall have the same success by the same grace that he had. And so is it with respect unto the faith of these worthies. Its success depended on God's ordinance and grace; for they were men subject to the like passions as we are.

(2.) The faith whereby they wrought these great things, was the same, of the same nature and kind, with that which is in every true believer. Wherefore, as it was effectual in them as unto those things and duties whereunto they were called, it will be so in us also, as unto all that we are or may be called unto.

(3.) Whereas their faith was exercised in conflicting with and conquering the enemies of the church, we also are engaged in a warfare wherein we have no less powerful adversaries to contend withal than they had, though of another kind. To destroy the kingdom of Satan in us, to demolish all his strongholds, to overcome the world in all its attempts on our eternal safety, will appear one day not to be inferior unto the conquest of kingdoms, and the overthrow of armies. See Eph. 6:10–12, etc.

(4.) Most of the persons mentioned did themselves fall into such sins and miscarriages, as to manifest that they stood in need of pardoning grace and mercy as well as we; and that therefore our faith may be effectual, on the account thereof, as well as theirs. Gideon's making of the ephod out of the spoils of the Midianites cannot be excused, and is condemned by the Holy Ghost, Judg. 8:27. Jephthah's rash vow, and, as is supposed, more rash accomplishment of it, enrols him among sinners, chap. 11. Samson's taking a

wife of the Philistines, then keeping company with a harlot, were sins of a high provocation; not to mention the killing of himself at the close of all, for which he seems to have had a divine warranty. And it is known what great sins David himself fell into. And we may learn hence,—

Obs. II. That it is not the dignity of the person that gives efficacy unto faith, but it is faith that makes the person accepted.

Obs. III. That neither the guilt of sin nor the sense of it should hinder us from acting faith on God in Christ, when we are called thereunto.

Obs. IV. That true faith will save great sinners. For that they were all saved who are on this catalogue of believers, the apostle expressly affirms, verse 30.

That which we are taught in the whole is, that—

Obs. V. There is nothing so great or difficult, or seemingly insuperable, no discouragement so great from a sense of our own unworthiness by sin, nor opposition arising against us from both of them in conjunction, that should hinder us from believing, and the exercise of faith in all things, when we are called thereunto.—The truth is, the first call of men to believe, is when they are under the greatest sense of sin; and some of them, it may be, of sins great and heinous,—as it was with them who were accessory to the murder of Christ himself, Acts 2: and our call is, to believe things more great and excellent than the conquest of earthly kingdoms.

Hebrews 11: 33

From the enumeration of the persons that believed, the apostle proceeds to declare the things which they wrought by faith; all unto the same end,—to encourage us to make use of the same grace in all our occasions. And four instances he giveth in this verse.

Ver. 33.—Οἳ διὰ πίστεως κατηγωνίσαντο βασιλείας, εἰργάσαντο δικαιοσύνην, ἐπέτυχον ἐπαγγελιῶν, ἔφραξαν στόματα λεόντων.

Διὰ πίστεως, "through faith:" the same with πίστει all along in the chapter absolutely, an instrumental cause. The words are of common use, and there is no difference in the translation of them.

Ver. 33.—Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions.

οἱ. The persons unto whom these things are ascribed are included in the article οἱ: and it refers not only unto those named, but unto others also whose faith in these things is recorded in the Scripture. For adding, in the close of his enumeration of names, "and the prophets," he intimates that he intends them all.

Καταγωνίζομαι. 1. The first thing ascribed unto them is, that they "subdued kingdoms." Ἀγωνίζομαι, is to "fight," to "contend," to enter into trial of strength and courage in the theatre or field; and thence καταγωνίζομαι, the word here used, is to "prevail in battle," to conquer, to subdue.

Βασιλείας. "They subdued kingdoms." This is generally and rightly assigned unto Joshua and David. Joshua subdued all the kingdoms in Canaan; and David all those about it, as Moab, Ammon, Edom, Syria, and the Philistines.

But it may be inquired, how this conquering of kingdoms should be esteemed a fruit and effect of faith; for the most of them who have subdued kingdoms in the world, have not only been unbelievers, but for the most part wicked and bloody tyrants. Such have they all been by whom the great monarchies of the world have been raised out of the ruins of other lesser kingdoms.

I say, therefore, that the kingdoms subdued by faith were of two sorts: (1.) Those within the land of Canaan, which were destroyed by Joshua. And these had all, by their sins and wickedness, forfeited their land and lives unto divine justice, God having given the country unto the Israelites. Wherefore, in the conquest of them, they did only execute the judgments of God, and take possession of that which was their own. (2.) Such as were about that land, which was the inheritance and possession of the church, and were enemies unto it upon the account of the worship of the true God. Such were those conquered by David. Now, it was the will of God that they should be so far subdued, as that the land might be a quiet habitation unto his people.

Wherefore "through faith" they subdued these kingdoms; in that they did it, (1.) On God's command. It was the will and command of God that they should so subdue them. (2.) In the accomplishment of his promises; for he had given them all those kingdoms by promise before they were subdued. A due respect unto this command and promise made what they did a fruit of faith. (3.) The persons destroyed by them were devoted to destruction for their own sins; the people did only execute the righteous judgment of God upon them, so as what they did was for the good of the church. So it was on just causes. (4.) This

subduing of kingdoms was an act of faith, in that it was typical of the victory of Christ over the kingdom of the devil and all the powers of darkness, in the redemption of the church. Hence both Joshua and David were especial types of him.

We may yet further observe, that although it was through faith that they subdued kingdoms, yet in the doing of it they made use of all heroical virtues, such as courage, valour, military skill, and the like. Never, doubtless, were there on the earth more valiant men than Joshua and David were, nor who underwent greater hardship and danger in war. For these things are consistent, yea, mutually helpful unto one another. For as faith will excite all graces and virtues that are useful in and unto any work that men are called unto, as these were unto war and the subduing of kingdoms; so they are subservient unto faith in what it is called unto. Hence God took order in the law, that those who were fearful and faint-hearted should be discharged from engaging in this work of subduing kingdoms.

Now, although we are not called unto this work, yet we may hence conclude, that if there be any kingdoms on the earth that stand in the way of faith and the accomplishment of divine promises, faith will yet have the same effect, and at one time or another, by one means or another, subdue them all.

Εἰργάσαντο δικαιοσύνην. 2. The second thing ascribed unto these worthies is, that through faith they "wrought righteousness." There is a threefold exposition of these words, with respect unto a threefold state of life and a threefold righteousness, namely, military, moral, and political.

(1.) In the first way, to work righteousness is as much as to execute judgment, namely, the judgment of God on the enemies of the church. But the phrase of speech will scarcely bear this interpretation, nor is it anywhere used unto this purpose. But if this be the meaning of the word, it is fully declared, Ps. 149:6–9: "Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a two-edged sword in their hand; to execute vengeance upon the heathen, and punishments upon the people; to bind their kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron; to execute upon them the judgment written: this honour have all his saints. Praise ye the LORD."

(2.) In a moral sense it compriseth a respect unto all the duties of the second table. And so ἐργάζεσθαι δικαιοσύνην is the same with ποιεῖν δικαιοσύνην, 1 John 3:7, to "do righteousness;" that is, "denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, to live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world," as Tit. 2:12. And this also

is a fruit of faith. Men may do actions that are good, righteous and just in themselves, as many did among the heathen; but universal righteousness, from right principles, and with right ends, is a fruit of faith alone. But whereas this is in its measure common unto all believers, it doth not seem to be that which in a peculiar manner is ascribed unto these worthies.

(3.) To work righteousness in a political sense, is to be righteous in rule and government, to administer justice and judgment unto all that are under their rule. Now the persons mentioned expressly being all of them rulers or judges, and this righteousness being of such eminent use unto the church and to the world, it is likely to be that which is here ascribed unto them. An account hereof David gives in himself, Ps. 101 throughout; who is therefore here intended. As is Samuel also, whose working of righteousness in this kind is recorded, 1 Sam. 7:15–17.

And a fruit of faith it is for rulers and judges thus to work righteousness, considering the manifold temptations they have unto partiality, by bribes and acceptation of persons; as also the opposition which they shall be sure to meet withal in many instances of their duty. And it is the want of faith that is the cause of all the injustice and oppression that are in the world.

3. It is said of them, that they "obtained promises." Sundry expositors have taken pains to reconcile this with what is said verse 39, as though "they obtained promises," and "they received not the promise," were contradictory. But they make a difficulty themselves where there is none; which when they have done, they cannot easily solve. For ἐπέτυχον ἐπαγγελιῶν, "they obtained promises," namely, the things which were peculiarly promised unto them in their occasions, may well consist with οὐκ ἐκομίσαντο τήν ἐπαγγελίαν, "they received not that" great "promise" of the coming of Christ in the flesh, namely, in the actual accomplishment of it. Wherefore the promises here intended, which by faith they obtained, were such as were made particularly unto themselves;—as unto Joshua, that he should conquer Canaan; unto Gideon, that he should defeat the Midianites; and unto David, that he should be king of all Israel.

And they are said to "obtain" these promises, because of the difficulty that was in their accomplishment, yea, and sometimes a seeming impossibility. How often was the faith of Joshua tried in the conquest of Canaan! yet at length he "obtained the promise." Gideon was put on a great improbability, when he was commanded with three hundred men to attempt and set upon an innumerable

host; and yet he "obtained the promise," in their destruction. And it is known how long and by what various ways the faith of David was tried and exercised, before the promise made to him was fulfilled.

Obs. I. There is nothing that can lie in the way of the accomplishment of any of God's purposes, but it is conquerable by faith.—Or, whatever difficulties any one may have to conflict withal in the discharge of his duty, if he abide in faith, he shall in the issue obtain the promises; that is, the things promised which he doth believe.

4. It is ascribed unto them, that they "stopped the mouths of lions." Stopping the mouths of lions, may intend the preventing them from destroying and devouring, by any means whatever. It is with their mouths that they devour, and he that hinders them from devouring may well be said to stop their mouths. In this sense it may be ascribed unto Samson, who, when a young lion roared against him in an approach to devour him, stopped his mouth by rending him to pieces, Judges 14:5, 6. In like manner David stopped the mouth of a lion, when he slew him, 1 Sam. 17:34, 35. But if the word be to be taken in its proper signification, to put a bridle or stop to the mouth of a lion, so as he shall neither hurt nor devour though he be kept alive and at liberty, then it is applied unto Daniel only; for so it is said of him expressly, when he was cast into the den of lions, that God had sent his angel and shut the lions' mouths, that they did not hurt him. He "stopped the mouths of lions," Dan. 6:22. And he did it by faith; for although the ministry of angels was used therein, yet it was done "because he believed in his God," verse 23. And,—

Obs. II. That faith that hath thus stopped the mouths of lions, can restrain, disappoint, and stop the rage of the most savage oppressors and persecutors of the church.

Hebrews 11: 34, 35

Ἔσβεσαν δύναμιν πυρὸς, ἔφυγον στόματα μαχαίρας·, ἐνεδυναμώθησαν ἀπὸ ἀσθενείας, ἐγενήθησαν ἰσχυροὶ ἐν πολέμω, παρεμβολὰς ἔκλιναν ἀλλοτρίων· ἔλαβον γυναῖκες ἐξ ἀναστάσεως τοὺς νεκροὺς αὐτῶν.

Ver. 34, 35.—Quenched the violence [the power] of fire; escaped [fled from] the edge [edges] of the sword; out of weakness were made strong; waxed [were made] valiant [powerful, strong] in fight; turned to flight the armies of the aliens, [or, overthrew the tents or camps of the aliens.] Women received their dead [by a resurrection] raised to life again.

Six more instances of the power of faith are added unto those foregoing; and these taken from things of all sorts, to let us know that there is nothing of any kind whatever, wherein we may be concerned, but that faith will be useful and helpful in it.

Ἔσβεσαν δύναμιν πυρός. 1. The first instance is, that they "quenched the violence of fire." He doth not say they quenched the fire, which may be done by natural means; but they took off, abated, restrained the power of fire, as if the fire itself had been utterly quenched. This, therefore, belongs unto the three companions of Daniel, who were cast into "the burning fiery furnace," Dan. 3:23. The fire continued still, and had its burning power in it, for it slew the men that cast them into the furnace; but by faith they "quenched" or restrained the power and violence of it towards themselves, so as that "not an hair of their head was singed," verse 27.

And the faith of these men was considerable, in that it did not consist in an assurance that they should be so miraculously delivered, but only in committing themselves unto the omnipotency and sovereignty of God in the discharge of their duty; as it is declared, verses 16–18. A resolution to perform their duty, whatever was the event, committing the disposal of themselves unto the sovereignty of God, with a full persuasion of his power to do whatever he pleased, and that he would do whatever was for his own glory, was the faith whereby they "quenched the violence of fire." And,—

As this faith is imitable in us (for though a miracle ensued on it, yet was it not the faith of miracles), so it will never fail of those blessed effects which tend unto the glory of God and good of the church.

Ἔφυγον στόματα μαχαίρας. 2. They "escaped the edge of the sword;" the edges of it,—swords with two edges. In the Greek it is, "the mouths of the sword;" from the Hebrew, פִּי חָרֶב: and a two-edged sword they call "a sword of mouths;" as in the Greek μάχαιρα δίστομος, Heb. 4:12. "They escaped:" Vulg. Lat., "effugaverunt," by an escape, for "effugerunt." The way of their escape from death, when in danger of it by the sword, is intimated, namely, by flight from the danger; wherein God was present with them for their deliverance and preservation. So was it frequently with David when he fled from the sword of Saul, which was at his throat several times, and he escaped by flight; wherein God was with him. So did Elijah, when he was threatened to be slain by Jezebel, 1 Kings 19:3.

Now, this should seem rather to be the effect of fear than of faith; however, it had good success. But,—

Obs. I. It is the wisdom and duty of faith to apply itself unto all lawful ways and means of deliverance from danger.—Not to use means, when God affords them unto us, is not to trust in him, but to tempt him. Fear will be in all cases of danger, and yet faith may have the principal conduct of the soul. And a victory is sometimes obtained by flight.

Ἐνεδυναμώθησαν ἀπὸ ἀσθενείας. 3. Some of them "out of weakness were made strong." Ἀσθενεόα is any kind of weakness or infirmity, moral or corporeal. In each of these senses it is used in the Scripture;—to be without or to want strength in any kind. Frequently it is applied to bodily distempers, Luke 13:11, 12; John 5:5, 11:4; Acts 28:9. And so it is here used. For the conjecture of Chrysostom and others of the Greek scholiasts, that respect is had herein unto the Jews in the Babylonish captivity, who were weakened therein, and afterwards restored unto strength and power, hath no probability in it. They are the words in Isaiah that the apostle doth almost express: "The writing of Hezekiah king of Judah, when he had been sick, and was recovered of his sickness," chap. 38:9. For this was through faith, as is evident in the story, and was in part miraculous.

Obs. II. We ought to exercise faith about temporal mercies; as they are ofttimes received by it, and given in on the account of it.—In the miraculous cure of many diseases by our Saviour himself, there was a concurrence of the faith of them that were healed: "Thy faith hath made thee whole."

Ἐγενήθησαν ἰσχυροὶ ἐν πολέμω. 4. Some of them through faith "waxed," were made "valiant," strong "in fight," or battle. As this may be applied unto many of them, as Joshua, Barak, Gideon, Jephthah, so David affirms of himself, that "God taught his hands to war, so as that a bow of steel was broken by his arms;" and, that "he did gird him with strength unto battle," Ps. 18:34, 39;—the same thing which is here affirmed.

Παρεμβολὰς ἔκλιναν ἀλλοτρίων. 5. Of the same kind is that which followeth: they "turned to flight the armies of the aliens." Erasmus renders these words, "incursiones averterunt exterorum,"—they "turned away the incursions of the aliens;" mistaking both the words, as many have observed. Παρεμβολαί are the "camps," the fortified tents of an army: but the word is used for an army itself; as Gen. 32:7; 1 Sam. 4:16;—a host encamped, like that of the Midianites when Gideon went down unto it, Judg. 7:10. And his overthrow of that host is here principally intended; for so it was signified in the dream, that the tents should

be smitten and overturned, verse 13. But because the apostle useth the word in the plural number, it compriseth other enterprises of the like nature, as that of Barak, and of Jonathan against the Philistines, with the victories of Asa and Jehoshaphat; in all which there was an eminent exercise of faith, as the stories of them declare. And these "aliens" were those whom the Scripture calls זָרִים; that is, not only "foreigners," but "strangers" from and "enemies" unto the church of God. And where this defence against foreign invasions is neglected, there can be no assured ground of security or deliverance, whatever the success may be.

Ἔλαβον γυναῖκες ἐξ ἀναστάσεως τοῦς νεκροῦς αὐτῶν. 6. It is added, "Women received their dead raised to life again." These women were the widow of Zarephath, whose son Elijah raised from death, 1 Kings 17:22–24; and the Shunammite, whose son was raised by Elisha, 2 Kings 4:36. And it is said of them, that they received their children from the dead; for in both places the prophets, having raised them from the dead, gave them into their mothers' arms; who received them with joy and thankfulness. Their faith is not expressed; but respect is rather had unto the faith of the prophets, who obtained this miraculous operation by faith. However, at least one of them, namely, the Shunammite, seems to have exercised much faith in the whole matter. And it is said, "they received their dead," their children which had been dead, ἐξ ἀναστάσεως, "out of," or "by a resurrection."

These ten instances did the apostle choose out to give of the great things that had been done through faith, to assure the Hebrews, and us with them, that there is nothing too hard or difficult for faith to effect, when it is set on work and applied according to the mind of God.

Hebrews 11: 35–37

He proceeds in the next place unto instances quite of another nature, and which were more immediately suited unto the condition of the Hebrews. For hearing of these great and glorious things, they might be apt to think that they were not so immediately concerned in them; for their condition was poor, persecuted, exposed to all evils, and death itself, for the profession of the gospel. Their interest, therefore, was to inquire, what help, what relief from faith, they might expect in that condition. What will faith do where men are to be oppressed, persecuted, and slain? Wherefore the apostle, applying himself directly unto their condition, with what they suffered and further feared on the account of their profession of the gospel, produceth a multitude of examples, as

so many testimonies unto the power of faith in safeguarding and preserving the souls of believers, under the greatest sufferings that human nature can be exposed unto. And sundry things lie plain in this discourse of the apostle:—

1. That he would not hide from these believers what they might meet withal and undergo in and for their profession. He lets them know that many of them who went before them in the same cause, underwent all manner of miseries on the account thereof. Therefore ought not they to think it "a strange thing" if they also should be called unto the like trials and sufferings. Our Lord Jesus Christ dealt openly and plainly in this matter; he hid nothing of what was likely to befall them whom he called to be his disciples, but professed directly that he would admit of them on no other terms to be his disciples, but that they denied themselves and took up the cross, or engaged to undergo all sorts of sufferings for his sake and the gospel's. He deceiveth none with fair promises of things in this world; nor ought we to be surprised, nor ought we to complain, of any thing that may befall us in our following him; no, not of a "fiery trial," 1 Pet. 4:12, 5:9. So the apostle here, having given instances of the great and glorious things that have been done even in this world by faith, that those Hebrews might not expect that they should also be called to enjoy the like successes and victories, because they had the same spirit of faith with them who did so, he minds them of those who were called to exercise their faith in the greatest miseries that could be undergone.

2. That all the evils here enumerated did befall the persons intended on the account of their faith, and the profession thereof. He doth not present them with a company of miserable, distressed creatures, that fell into that state through their own default, or merely on the account of a common providence disposing their lot in this world into such a state of misery, as it is with many; but all the things mentioned they underwent merely and solely on the account of their faith in God, and the profession of true religion: so as that their case differed in nothing from that which they might be called unto. And from both these we may learn,—

Obs. I. That it belongs unto the sovereign pleasure of God, to dispose of the outward state and condition of the church as unto its seasons of prosperity and persecution. As also,—

Obs. II. That those whose lot falleth in the times of greatest distress or sufferings are no less accepted with him than those who enjoy the highest terrene felicity and success.

3. There is as much glory, unto a spiritual eye, in the catalogue of the effects of faith that follows, as in that which went before. The church is no less beautiful and glorious when encompassed and seemingly overwhelmed with all the evils and dreadful miseries here recounted, than when it is in the greatest peace and prosperity. To look, indeed, only on the outside of them, gives a terrible, undesirable prospect. But to see faith and love to God working effectually under them all, to see comforts retained, yea consolations to abound, holiness promoted, God glorified, the world condemned, the souls of men profited, and at length triumphant over all;—this is beautiful and glorious.

4. That to do the greatest things, and to suffer the hardest, is all one to faith. It is equally ready for both, as God shall call; and equally effectual in both. These things, unto the flesh, differ next to heaven and hell: they are both alike to faith, when duty calls.

5. That the evils here enumerated are of such various sorts and kinds, as to comprise every thing that may befall believers on the account of their profession:—temptation, scorn, mockings, scourgings, bonds, imprisonments, troubles of poverty, fears, and dangers; and those of long continuance, with death itself by all sorts of tortures and extremities. It is impossible that any believer can be called to suffer any thing, in any kind whatever, for the profession of the gospel, but that he may find an instance of it in the sufferings of these martyrs. And it is an encouragement in the greatest distresses, to remember that others in the same cause have undergone them, and been carried victoriously through them. There is good use to be made of the records of the sufferings of the primitive Christians under their pagan oppressors, and of believers of late ages under the power of antichrist.

6. It may be observed, that as the apostle obliged not himself unto the order of time in naming the foregoing witnesses, so here he useth his own liberty in representing these sufferings of the church, without respect unto any method of coherence between the things themselves, or order of time as to the seasons wherein they fell out. Hence, in the midst of his account of the various sorts of death which they underwent, he interposeth that they were "tempted:" verse 37, "They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword." This hath given occasion to many to question whether the word "tempted" do indeed belong unto the text, or whether it is not a mistake in the copies, for a word of almost an alike sound, but quite of another signification, namely, they were "burned;—but without cause; for it is evident that the apostle obligeth himself unto no such order as that things of the same nature should be

placed together, without the interposition of any thing else. And we shall see there was occasion to interpose that expression, "They were tempted," in the place where it is put by the apostle.

7. It may also be observed, that the apostle takes most of these instances, if not all of them, from the time of the persecution of the church under Antiochus, the king of Syria, in the days of the Maccabees. And we may consider, concerning this season, (1.) That it was after the closing of the canon of the Scripture, or putting of the last hand unto writings by divine inspiration under the old testament. Wherefore, though the apostle represented these things from the notoriety of fact, then fresh in memory, and, it may be, from some books then written of those things, like the books of the Maccabees, yet remaining; yet as they are delivered out unto the church by him, they proceeded from divine inspiration. (2.) That in those days wherein these things fell out there was no extraordinary prophet in the church. Prophecy, as the Jews confess, ceased under the second temple. And this makes it evident that the rule of the word, and the ordinary ministry of the church, are sufficient to maintain believers in their duty against all oppositions whatever. (3.) That this last persecution of the church under the old testament, by Antiochus, was typical of the last persecution of the Christian church under Antichrist, as is evident unto all that compare the prophecy of Daniel, chap. 8:9–14, 23–25, 11:36–39, with that of the Revelation in sundry places. And indeed the Martyrologies of those who have suffered under the Roman Antichrist are a better exposition of this context than any that can be given in words.

Ver. 35.—Ἄλλοι δέ ἐτυμπανίσθησαν, οὐ προσδεξάμενοι τήν ἀπολύτρωσιν ἵνα κρείττονος ἀναστάσεως τύχωσιν.

Ἐτυμπανίσθησαν. Syr., בְּשָׁנְדָא מִיתוּ, "they died with torments." Vulg. Lat., "districti sunt;" Rhem., "were racked," stretched out;—respecting that kind of torture wherein they were stretched on a wheel, as a skin is on the head of a drum. So Beza and Erasmus. We use a more general word, "were tortured."

Οὐ προσδεξάμενοι τήν ἀπολύτρωσιν. Syr., וְלָא סַכְיו לְמֶתְפַּצָיוּ. Trem., "neque intenti expectarunt ut liberentur." Others render it by "non speraverunt." "They looked not earnestly after deliverance," "they hoped not for it;" that is, they regarded it not. Vulg., "non suscipientes redemptionem." "Not accepting redemption;" that is, deliverance; "liberationem."

Ἵνα κρείττονος ἀναστάσεως τύχωσιν. Syr., דְּקְיָמְתָא מְיַתַיְתָא הֱוֶוא לְהוֹן, "that there might be to them a more excellent resurrection." Vulg., "ut meliorem invenirent resurrectionem." Rhem., "that they might find a better resurrection." "Invenio" is ofttimes used for "to attain," or "obtain." Others, "ut consequerentur," "nanciscerentur," "that they might obtain."

Ver. 35.—Others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection.

The apostle passeth unto the second sort of them in whom faith exerted its power and efficacy in their sufferings. These he saith were "others;" persons of another sort, that were called unto other duties than those before mentioned. And this distinction is further signified by the particle δέ, "but;"—'others there were.'

Three things he mentions of them in this first instance: 1. What they suffered. 2. How they acted faith in their sufferings. 3. On what grounds they did it.

1. For the first, he affirms that they were "tortured." The word here used, ἐτυμπανίσθησαν, hath been by critics and others so coursed through all sorts of authors, that there needs no further search after it. The substance of their discoveries is, that τύμπανον, "tympanum," whence the word is framed, doth signify either an engine whereon those who were tortured were stretched out, as a skin is stretched on the head of a drum; or the instruments which were used in the striking and beating them who were fastened unto that engine, like those who have their bones broken on a wheel. So some render the word by "fustibus multati, contusi, caesi." But whereas the word is frequently used to signify "taking away the lives of men by any kind of torture or tormenting pain," the precise notation of it from its original is not here much to be regarded. We have therefore rendered it, and that properly in general, "were tortured;" that is, unto death.

There is no doubt but the apostle hath respect herein unto the story that is recorded in the sixth and seventh chapters of the Second Book of the Maccabees. For the words are a summary of the things and sayings there ascribed unto Eleazar, who was beaten to death, when he had been persuaded and allured to accept deliverance by transgressing the law. And the like respect may be had unto the mother and her seven sons, whose story and torments are there also recorded.

And this is the height of what the old murderer could rise and attain unto. He began with a sudden death, by violence and blood. But when he had got advantages, he was not contented therewith. He would have the servants of the living God to die by all sorts of tortures. This was his hell, a hell of his making. But he could never put the displeasure of God into it, nor make it of any continuance. Divine wrath, and perpetuity under it, are his own portion. But that which is most marvellous herein is, that he should get amongst men such as should execute his infernal rage and malice. There was never any greater instance of the degeneracy of human nature unto the image and likeness of the devil than this, that so many of them have been found, and that in high places of power, emperors, kings, judges, and priests, who were not satisfied to take away the lives of the true worshippers of God by the sword, or by such other ways as they slew the worst of malefactors, but invented all kinds of hellish tortures whereby to destroy them. For although the crafts of Satan were open and evident herein, who designed by these ways to get time and advantage for his temptations to draw them off from the profession of the faith, which he could not have had in a speedy execution, yet is it astonishable that the nature of man should be capable of so much villany and inhumanity.

But this also hath God seen good to permit, in that patience whereby he endures with much long-suffering "the vessels of wrath, that are fitted for destruction." And he doth it for many blessed ends of his own glory and the eternal salvation of his church, not here to be insisted on.

"They were tortured." This is the utmost that the devil and the world can reach unto, all the hell he hath to threaten his enemies withal. But when he hath done his utmost it falls only on the body,—it cannot reach the soul; it is but of a short continuance, and gives assurance of an entrance into a blessed eternity. It can shut out no divine consolation from the minds of them that suffer; a little "precious faith" will carry believers victoriously through the worst of all.

The work of faith with respect unto these tortures, which are the utmost trials of it, may be reduced unto these heads: (1.) A steady view of that promised eternal glory which they are on an entrance into, 2 Cor. 4:17, 18. (2.) A due comparing of present sufferings with the eternal miseries of the damned in hell, Matt. 10:28. (3.) A firm persuasion that these things shall make no separation between God and them, Rom. 8:35–39. (4.) A derivation of present help, strength, and consolation from God, by mixing itself with his promises. (5.) By a due consideration of the presence of Christ with us, and his concernment in

our sufferings. And sundry other ways there are of the like nature whereby faith acts itself, and is victorious under tortures; that none of us may tremble at the thought of Smithfield flames.

Οὐ προσδεξάμενοι ἀπολύτρωσιν. 2. The way whereby those who were tortured did evidence their faith, was, that they "accepted no deliverance;" that is, freedom from their tortures, which was offered them in case they would forego their profession. This is expressly affirmed of Eleazar and the seven brethren. Yea, they were not only offered to be freed from tortures and death, but to have great rewards and promotions: which they generously refused. And it was not thus only with them, but it hath been so always with all that have been tortured for religion. For the principal design of the devil in bringing them unto tortures, is not to slay their bodies thereby; though that he aims at in the next place, in case his first design fail, which is to destroy their souls. And therefore we find in all ages, especially in the primitive times of Christianity, that when the cruel persecutors brought any unto tortures, after they began with them they still gave them a space and respite, wherein they dealt with them by fair means and entreaties, as well as threatening further torments, to renounce their profession. And with some they prevailed; but those who were steadfast in the faith refused to accept of deliverance on such terms. The story of Blandina, a virgin and a servant, in the excellent Epistle of the Churches of Vienne and Lyons, about their persecution, is worth the perusal of all good Christians.

Now, that which those persons intended suffered these tortures for, and from which they would not accept of deliverance, was only because they would not eat swine's flesh. And unto Eleazar it was offered, that he should "bring flesh of his own providing" unto the place where he was to eat, and only make an appearance that he had eaten swine's flesh; which he refused, 2 Mac. 6:21. It may be this would by some be esteemed a small matter, and such as by the refusal whereof wise men ought not to have undergone martyrdom by tortures. But the things which are commanded or forbidden of God are not to be esteemed by the matter of them, or what they are in themselves, but by the authority of him that commands or forbids them. And this is the same in the least as well as in the greatest things in religion. The authority of God may be despised in small things as well as in great. And therefore God doth ordinarily choose out arbitrary institutions to be the trial and touchstone of the faith of the church. So the martyrs here in England died on the account of the sacrament of the Lord's supper. And if we begin at any time to suppose, that, to save our lives, we may comply with some lesser things (such as bowing in the house of Rimmon)

that God hath forbidden, both faith and profession are lost. We know not what command, what ordinance, what institution, what prohibition, God will single out to be the means and subject of our trial as unto sufferings. If we are not equally ready to suffer for every one, we shall suffer for none at all. See James 2:10.

Ἵνα κρείττονος ἀναστάσεως τύχωσιν. 3. The ground of their steadfastness in their profession and under their tortures, was, "That they might obtain a better resurrection." So one of the brethren in the Maccabees, chap. 7:9, affirmed expressly that he endured those torments, and death itself, in that he believed that God would raise him up at the last day. This, as the Syriac hath it, they were "intent upon."

And this the apostle calls "a better resurrection," not only in opposition unto the deliverance which they refused, a resurrection that was better than that deliverance, but because he intends that better resurrection which is to life, seeing all shall rise again, but some to life, and some to everlasting torments.

Now, this faith of the resurrection of the dead is the topstone of the whole structure, system, and building in religion; that which states eternal rewards and punishments, and gives life unto our obedience and suffering. For without it, as the apostle testifies, "we are of all men the most miserable." This, therefore, is that which their minds were fixed on under all their tortures, and wherewith they supported themselves, namely, that after all this they should have a blessed resurrection. See Phil. 3:10, 11.

Schlichtingius on this place acknowledged, that believers under the old testament had hopes of a blessed resurrection, but not by virtue of any promise of God, only they gathered it up out of some considerations of his goodness, and of his being a rewarder of them that seek him;—a vain, foolish opinion, striking at the very foundation of all religion, laying the ground of faith in the conjectures of men, and not on the veracity and faithfulness of God. But,—

Obs. Sufferings will stir us up unto the exercise of faith on the most difficult objects of it, and bring in the comforts of them into our souls.—Faith of the resurrection hath been always most eminent in prisons and under tortures.

Ver. 36.—In the next place we have the example of them who suffered also, but not by tortures, nor unto death, yet in such ways as were a great trial of their faith.

Ver. 36.—Ἕτεροι δὲ ἐμπαιγμῶν καὶ μαστίγων πεῖραν ἔλαβον, ἔτι δὲ δεσμῶν καὶ φυλακῆς.

The Syriac makes here two distinct sorts, repeating אַחֲרָנָא, "alii," "others," after πεῖραν ἔλαβον: as in the next verse it repeats the same word four times, which is not once in the original. Πεῖραν ἔλαβον it renders by עַלוּ, "they exposed themselves to mocking and stripes."

Ver. 36.—Others had trial of [had experience of, or were tried by,] [cruel] mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment.

Ἕτεροι. Δέ. 1. Those spoken of are said to be ἕτεροι, not merely ἄλλοι; not only "others," but "of another sort," namely, such as suffered through faith, but not by tortures, nor unto death. And the exceptive particle δέ intimates the introduction of another kind of sufferings.

2. It is of no use to fix the particulars mentioned unto certain determinate persons, as Jeremiah or others; for seeing the apostle hath left that undetermined, so may we do also. Certain it is, that there were in those days believers who, through faith, patiently and victoriously underwent these things.

There are four things mentioned distinctly under this head: 1. "Mockings." 2. "Scourgings." 3. "Bonds." 4. The "prison," or "imprisonment." And they contain all the outward ways of the sufferings of the church, when God restrains the rage of the world, so as that it shall not rise to blood and death.

So it often falls out. It is the utter destruction of the church that Satan and the world do always aim at; but ofttimes there are such bounds set unto their rage, by the division of their own counsels, by their supposed interests, by the more gentle inclinations of some Gamaliels among them, or for want of a pretence to execute the utmost of bloody cruelty, that they take up in mockings, stripes, imprisonments, spoiling of goods, and the like.

Πεῖραν ἔλαζον. Of these things it is said they "had trial." "Experti sunt," they had experience of them, they really underwent them; and so, by consequent, their faith was tried with them.

Ἐμταγμῶν. And the first thing mentioned is, as we render it, "cruel mockings." Ἐμταίζομαι is the word constantly used for the mockings that were cast on our Lord Jesus Christ himself, Matt. 20:19, 27:29, 31, 41; Mark 10:34, 15:31; Luke 14:29, 18:32, 22:63, 23:11, 36. Neither is the verb in either voice, active or passive, used in the New Testament, but only as applied to Christ. And it is joined with μαστιγόω, to "scourge," as it is here with "stripes." Ἐμπαιγμός, nowhere used but here, is "ludibrium," a "mocking with reproach and contumely or scorn." Hence we have rendered it "cruel mockings." They reproached them with their God, with their religion, with folly, with feigned

crimes. Such mockings are recorded in all the stories of the persecutions and sufferings of the church. The world is never more witty, nor doth more please itself, than when it can invent reproachful names, terms, and crimes, to cast upon suffering believers. And whereas the word is derived from παίζω, (as that is from παῖς,) "to play and mock childishly," it may respect the calumnious reproaches that ofttimes in the streets are cast on suffering professors, by the rude, foolish multitude, like the children that ran after Elisha, mocking and scoffing at him.

And this is reckoned among severe sufferings, there being nothing more harsh to ingenuous minds, nor any thing almost which they had not as willingly undergo. Nor is there any thing that their adversaries inflict on them with more self-pleasing and exultation of mind. Mockings are persecutors' triumphs. But these also faith will conflict withal and conquer: it hath done so in all ages. And it is a fruit of faith which we ought to aim at, namely, to keep our spirits composed, unto a contempt of shame under the most severe and scornful mockings.

Μαστίγων. Unto these sometimes "stripes" are added;—a servile punishment, used towards vagabonds and the vilest of men.

Of the last two ways of trial, namely, "bonds and imprisonment," we have had so full an exposition in the days wherein we live, that they need no further explication. And,—

Obs. There may be sufferings sufficient for the trial of the faith of the church, when the world is restrained from blood and death.—But how long at present it will be so, God only knows.

Ver. 37.—Ἐλιθάσθησαν, ἐπρίσθησαν, ἐπειράσθησαν, ἐν φόνῳ μαχαίρας ἀπέθανον· περιῆλθον ἐν μηλωταῖς, ἐν αἰγείοις δέρμασιν· ὑστερούμενοι, θλιβόμενοι, κακουχούμενοι.

Ἐπρίσθησαν, "dissecti," "secti sunt," "they were cut asunder;" "serrati sunt," "they were sawn asunder,"—cut asunder with a saw; which is usually referred to Isaiah, but without any ground from the Scripture: a punishment and torment used in the east, 2 Sam. 12:31; Amos 1:3.

Ἐπειράσθησαν. This word is omitted by the Syriac; nor doth Chrysostom take any notice of it. The Vulg. Lat. retains it; and it is in all approved Greek copies. But because it contains a sense which seems not to be suited unto the place it holds in the text, critics have made bold to multiply conjectures about it. Some say it is the word beforegoing, first written a second time upon a

mistake, and afterwards changed, by the addition of a letter or two, to give it a distinct signification; some say it should be ἐπυράθησαν, and others ἐπυρώθησαν, —"they were burned with the fire;" and every one doth well confute the conjectures of others. We shall retain the word in its proper place and signification.

Ἐν φόνῳ. Syr., בְּפוּמָא, "in the mouth" or "edge of the sword." Vulg. Lat., "in occisione gladii," "caede gladii occubuerunt;" "they fell" or "died by slaughter of the sword."

Περιῆλθον. Vulg., "circuiverunt," "they went about." Syr., "they wandered." Beza, "oberraverunt."

Ἐν μηλωταῖς. The Syriac interposeth לְבִישִׁין, "induti," "amicti," "clothed;" which is necessary unto the sense. Vulg. Lat., "in melotis." All suppose that translator understood not the sense of the Greek word, and so retained it. And Erasmus makes himself very merry in reflecting on Thomas, who gives some wild interpretations of it. Μῆλον is "a sheep." "In sheep-skins."

Ἐν αἰγείοις δέρμασιν. The Syriac transposeth this word, and prefixeth it unto the other, "in the skins of sheep and goats;" without necessity, for μηλωτή is "a sheep-skin."

Ὑστερούμενοι. Vulg., "egentes;" Syr., וְסָנִיקִין; "wanting," "poor;" properly, "destitute," "deprived of all."

Θλιζόμενοι. Vulg., Lat., "angustati," "straitened." Syr., אֲלִיצִין, "oppressed." "Pressi," "afflicti;" "pressed," "afflicted."

Κακουχούμενοι. Vulg. Lat., "afflicti." Syr., מְטַרְפִין, "conquassati," "conturbati;" "shaken," "troubled." "Malè habiti," "malè vexati." "Tormented," say we, as I suppose not properly. "Evilly-entreated," vexed with evils.

Ver. 37.—They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword, [died by slaughter of the sword:] they wandered about in sheepskins and goat-skins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented, [evilly-entreated.]

Two sorts of persons and two sorts of sufferings are here represented unto us: 1. Such as fell under the utmost rage of the world, suffering by death itself. 2. Such as, to escape death, did expose themselves to all sorts of miseries to be undergone in this life.

The same faith works equally, in them that die by violence, and them who, to escape death, expose themselves to other miseries, provided that the call unto the one or the other be of God.

1. Those of the first sort were killed three ways, or died three kinds of death; that is, some of them one way, and some of them another, as the Syriac translation distinguisheth them, by prefixing "some," or "others," to each sort: "Some were stoned, some were sawn asunder, some were slain with the sword." Amongst these outward sufferings of the body, the apostle interposeth the inward sufferings of their minds,—"They were tempted;" or whether this denoteth a peculiar kind of suffering, we shall afterwards consider.

Ἐλιθάσθησαν. (1.) The first way of their suffering death, was that they were "stoned." This kind of death was peculiar unto the people of the Jews. And therefore it is not amiss applied unto Naboth, 1 Kings 21:13; and Zechariah, 2 Chron. 24:20, 21. This punishment was appointed by law for blasphemers, idolaters, false prophets, and the like profaners of the true religion only. But when the persecuting world grew unto the height of impiety, it was applied unto those that were the true professors of it. So was the blood of the first Christian martyr shed under pretence of that law, Acts 7:59. And indeed the devil is never more a devil, nor more outrageous, than when he gets a pretence of God's weapons into his hands. Such hath been the name of "the church," and the like.

Ἐπρίσθησαν. (2.) They were "sawn asunder." Some were so, although their names and the particular fact are not recorded. A savage kind of torture, evidencing the malice of the devil, with the brutish rage and madness of persecutors.

Ἐπειράσθησαν. (3.) It is added, they were "tempted." This seems to be a trial of another kind than those wherewith it is joined; for it is mentioned among various sorts of violent deaths. But we are not to question the order or method of the apostle's words. The expression may denote either a distinct kind of suffering, or what befell them under their other sufferings, with which it is joined. In the first way, it lets us know how great a trial there is in temptations in a suffering season, and what vigour of faith is required to conflict with them. They are the fiery darts with which Satan in such a season fights against the souls of believers; and whereby ofttimes he more prevails than by outward and bodily pains. And when a season of persecution approacheth, there is nothing we ought to be more prepared for and armed against. Or the word may denote

the temptations wherewith they were tempted by their persecutors under their sufferings, and the threatenings of death unto them. For, as we declared before, in all such seasons the craft and malice of the devil and his instruments, ignorant of the hidden power of faith, endeavoured to work upon human frailty, by persuading them to spare themselves, requiring but little of them for their deliverance, with promise of rewards if they would forego their profession. And that this proceeds from the subtilty of Satan, our Lord Jesus Christ declares, in that when his apostle Peter would have dissuaded him from suffering, he lets him know that it was not from himself, but from the suggestion of the devil, Matt. 16:22, 23. This temptation, therefore, was the engine whereby he wrought in all those sufferings,—that which gave them all their power and efficacy towards his principal end, which was the destruction of their souls. For he will willingly spare the lives of many, to ruin the soul of one. Well, therefore, might this be reckoned among their trials, and in the conquest whereof their faith was eminent. And therefore it is an especial promise of our Lord Christ, that when persecution cometh, he will keep his from the hour and power of temptation, Rev. 3:10. This word, therefore, may keep its station in this place against all objections.

Ἐν φόνῳ μαχαίρας ἀπέθανον. (4.) The third instance of the ways whereby they suffered death, is, that they were "slain with the sword," or "died by the slaughter of the sword." The sword intended, is either that of injustice and oppression in form of law, or of violence and mere force. Sometimes they proceeded against those holy martyrs in form of law, and condemned them unto decollation, or the cutting off their heads by the sword; a way of punishment in use among the Grecians, and the Romans afterwards. And if this be intended, it refers probably unto the days of Antiochus, wherein many were so destroyed. Or it may intend the sword of violence, when persecutors in their rage have pursued, fallen upon, and destroyed multitudes by the sword, for their profession. So Jezebel slew the prophets of the Lord with the sword, 1 Kings 19:10. And in all times of the general prevalency of persecution, multitudes have been so destroyed. And the same course hath been continued under the new testament. Many have been "beheaded for the testimony of Jesus," Rev. 20:4; as his forerunner John the Baptist was, Luke 9:9. And innumerable multitudes have been slain both under the pagan and antichristian tyranny with the sword.

So have all sorts of death been consecrated to the glory of God in the sufferings of the church. Christ himself, God's great martyr, the amen and faithful witness, was crucified; John the Baptist, his forerunner, was beheaded;

Stephen, his first witness by death, was stoned. Nero first invented torments in the case of religion, which afterwards the devil and the world placed their greatest hopes of prevalency in. But,—

Obs. I. No instruments of cruelty, no inventions of the devil or the world, no terrible preparations of death, that is, no endeavours of the gates of hell, shall ever prevail against the faith of God's elect.

2. The latter part of the verse gives us an account of others, who, though they escaped the rage of their adversaries, as unto death in all the ways of it, yet gave their testimony unto the truth, and through faith bare that share in suffering which God called them unto. And two things the apostle declares concerning them: (1.) What they did; and, (2.) What was their inward and outward estate in their so doing.

(1.) As unto what they did, "they wandered about in sheep-skins and goat-skins."

Περιῆλθον. [1.] They "wandered about." They went about from place to place. To "wander," as we have rendered the word, is to go about from place to place without any fixed residence, or design of any certain, quiet habitation. So was it with them. They were driven from their own houses by law or violence. Cities, boroughs, corporations, were made unsafe for them, yea, and sometimes villages also, on one pretence or another. This cast them on this course of life, to wander up and down, sometimes fleeing from one city unto another, sometimes forced to forsake them all, and betake themselves unto the wilderness, as the apostle immediately declares. However, they had not any fixed, quiet habitation of their own. The best interpretation of this word and place is given us by the apostle in the instance of himself, 1 Cor. 4:11: Ἀστατοῦμεν,—'We "wander;" we have no abiding place, but move up and down, as men altogether uncertain where to fix.' And indeed the representation he makes of the state of the apostles in those days, 1 Cor. 4:9–13, and 2 Cor. 11:23–27, is a full and plain exposition of this place. And,—

Obs. II. It is no small degree of suffering, for men by law or violence to be driven from those places of their own habitation which the providence of God and all just right among men have allotted unto them.—A state whereof many in our days have had experience, who, being conscious unto themselves of no evil towards any sort of men, yet merely for the profession of the gospel and

exercise of their ministry, have been driven from their own houses, driven from all places that might accommodate them with any refreshment, to wander up and down that they might find a place to lodge a night in peace.

Ἐν μηλωταῖς, ἐν αἰγείοις δέρμασιν. [2.] But it may be said, that although they did thus go up and down, yet they travelled in good equipage, and had all manner of accommodations; which is not the worst kind of sojourning here in this world. But all things were otherwise with them. They thus wandered "in sheep-skins and goat-skins." There is no more intended in these expressions, but that in their wandering their outward condition was poor, mean, and contemptible. For as he declares it fully in the next words, so he gives an instance of it in the garments they wore, which were of the meanest and vilest sort that can be made use of, the unwrought skins of sheep and goats. Some, indeed, did voluntarily use these kinds of garments, as a testimony of their mortified condition. So did Elijah, who was said to be "an hairy man, girt with a girdle of leather;" not from the hair of his face or body, but from the kind of his garments, 2 Kings 1:8. So John the Baptist "had his raiment of camel's hair," while "his meat was locusts and wild honey," Matt. 3:4. And therefore the false prophets that were among the people did many of them wear garments of hair, which we render "rough garments," Zech. 13:4; to beget an opinion of that mortification which they pretended unto. Nothing here is intimated of choice, but necessity. They were poor men, that wandered up and down in poor clothing.

So have the saints of God in sundry seasons been reduced unto the utmost extremities of poverty and want which any man can be exposed unto. And there is a proclamation herein to all the world of these two things: 1st. That there is a satisfaction in faith and obedience to God; there are such internal consolations in that state as do outbalance all the outward evils that may be undergone for the profession of them. Without them the world may know, if they please, that those who do expose themselves unto these straits and difficulties for the preservation of their consciences entire unto God, do know as well as themselves how to value the good things of this life, which are needful to the refreshment of their natures. 2dly. That there is a future state, that there are eternal rewards and punishments, which will set all things aright, unto the glory of divine justice and the everlasting glory of them that have suffered.

(2.) The apostle more particularly declares their state in those expressions, "destitute, afflicted, tormented," or evilly-entreated.

[1.] He useth many words to express the variety of their sufferings in their wandering condition. Nothing was absent that might render it troublesome and afflictive. Wherefore, although, it may be, we may miss it in the especial intention of each word or expression, yet we cannot do so as unto the general intention, which is to declare all the properties and concomitants of a calamitous condition. And they are here so set forth, that no believer at any time may faint or despond on the account of any thing which may fall under the power of the world to inflict upon him.

[2.] In particular, they are said,—

Ὑστερούμενοι. 1st. To be "destitute." The Syriac and Vulgar render the word by "egentes," or "indigentes," "pauperes;" "poor," "needy," "wanting." All good Latin interpreters render it by "destituti:" which word is by use more significant in our language than any to the same purpose; for which cause we have borrowed it of the Latin, as we have done other words innumerable,—"destitute." Ὑστερέω and ὑστερέομαι are used in the New Testament sometimes in their proper signification, which is "to come behind," and so to fall short, or to be cast behind, Rom. 3:23, 1 Cor. 1:7, 2 Cor. 11:5; but most commonly "to want" or "lack" in any kind, "to be deprived" of what we stand in need of, Luke 15:14, Phil. 4:12. Being referred, as it is here, to a course of life, it is "to want," "to be deprived" of necessary accommodations,—to be kept without friends, relations, habitation, and such other supplies of life as others do enjoy. So ὑστέρημα is "penuria," "poverty," a poor, wanting condition, Luke 21:4. That I judge which is most particularly intended in this word, is want of friends, and all means of relief from them or by them. And this, as some know, is a severe ingredient in suffering. But as our Lord Jesus Christ told his disciples, they should all forsake him and leave him alone, yet he was not alone, for the Father was with him, John 16:32; so is it with suffering believers: though they are outwardly destitute, left and forsaken of all means of comfort and relief, yet they are not utterly so; they are not alone, for Christ is with them.

Θλιβόμενοι. 2dly. In this condition they were "afflicted." The former word declares what was absent, what they had not, namely, outward supplies and comforts; this declares what they had, what was present with them,—they were straitened, or afflicted. The Vulgar renders the word by "angustiati," "brought into straits:" the Syriac by "pressi" or "oppressi;" "pressed," "oppressed:" we constantly render this word, in all its variations, by "affliction" and "afflicted." But this is of a general signification, every thing that is grievous, evil, or troublesome. Here the word seems to have peculiar respect unto the great straits

which they were brought into, by the great dangers that continually pressed on them. This state was very afflictive; that is, grievous, pressing, and troublesome unto their minds. For when we are called to suffer for the gospel, it is the will of God that we should be sensible of and affected with the evils we undergo, that the power of faith may be evident in the conquest of them.

Κακουχούμενοι. 3dly. It is added, that they were "tormented." So we render the word; the Vulg. Lat. reads "afflicti;" which is the proper meaning of the foregoing word: the Syriac by "conquassati," "conturbati;" "shaken," greatly troubled: others properly "malè habiti," or "malè vexati;" "evilly-entreated," which is the signification of the word, and not "tormented," as we have rendered it. In this wandering condition they met with very ill treatment in the world. All sorts of persons took occasion to vex and press them with all sorts of evils. And this is the constant entertainment that such wanderers meet withal in this world. Whatever is judged evil and vexatious unto them is on all occasions cast upon them. Reproaches, defamations, revilings, threatenings, contempt, are the things they continually meet withal. And,—

Obs. III. He will be deceived who at any time, under a sincere profession of the gospel, looks for any other, any better treatment or entertainment in the world.

Hebrews 11: 38

The apostle hath not yet finished his account of the sufferings of these worthies; yet he thought meet to interpose a character of their persons. For men in this course of life might be looked on, and were so by some, as the "offscouring of all things," and unmeet either for human converse or any of the good things of this world, but rather to be esteemed as the beasts of the field. These thoughts the apostle obviates in another kind of testimony concerning them, and so proceeds unto the end of his account concerning their sufferings: —

Ver. 38.—Ὧν οὐκ ἦν ἄξιος ὁ κόσμος· ἐν ἐρημίαις πλανώμενοι, καὶ ὄρεσι, καὶ σπηλαίοις, καὶ ταῖς ὀπαῖς τῆς γῆς.

Ver. 38.—Of whom the world was not worthy: they wandered in deserts, and [in] mountains, and [in] dens and caves of the earth.

There are two things in these words: 1. The character which the apostle gives of these sufferers; "The world was not worthy of them." 2. The remainder of their sufferings which he would represent; "They wandered in deserts," etc.

Ὁ κόσμος. 1. Their character is, that "the world was not worthy of them." By "the world," not the fabric of heaven and earth is intended. For in that sense God hath appointed this world for the habitation of his people; it is therefore meet for them and worthy of them, whilst their mortal life is continued. And therefore our blessed Saviour affirms, that he did not pray that God would take them out of this world, but only that he would keep them from the evil that is in it, John 17:15. Nor by "the world" is merely intended mankind living in the world. For under that consideration they are meet for society, and may have good done unto them by the people of God, Micah 5:7. But by "the world" is understood the inhabitants of it, in their interests, designs, ends, and actings, their successes in them, and advantages by them, as they are opposite unto the true interest of the church and people of God. In this sense, "the world" hath a high opinion of itself, as possessed of all that is desirable, despising and hating them who are not in conjunction with it in these things: the world in its power, pride, pomp, enjoyments, and the like.

Ὧν οὐκ ἦν ἄξιος. Of this world it is said, that it was "not worthy" of those sufferers. It was not so in the ages and seasons wherein they lived; nor is so of them who suffer in any other age whatever. The world thinks them not worthy of it, or to live in it, to enjoy any name or place among the men of it. Here is a testimony given to the contrary,—that the world is not worthy of them. Nor can any thing be spoken to the greater provocation of it. To tell the great, the mighty, the wealthy, the rulers of the world, that they are not worthy of the society of such as in their days are poor, destitute, despised, wanderers, whom they hurt and persecute, as the "offscouring of all things," is that which fills them with indignation. There is not an informer or apparitor but would think himself disparaged by it. But they may esteem of it as they please; we know that this testimony is true, and the world one day shall confess it so to be. And we must see in what sense it is here affirmed.

Chrysostom and the Greek expositors after him, suppose that a comparison is here made between the worth of the world and that of suffering believers; and that the apostle affirms that these sufferers, yea, any one of them, is more worth than the whole world. This may be true in some sense; but that truth is not the sense of this place. For the design of the apostle is to obviate an objection, that these persons were justly cast out, as not worthy the society of mankind; which he doth by a contrary assertion, that the world was not worthy of them. And it was not so in two respects: (1.) It was not worthy of their society, or to have converse with them; no more than slaves are worthy of or meet for the society

of princes. For he speaks of the world as it is engaged in persecution; and so it is unworthy of the converse of persecuted saints. (2.) It is not worthy of those mercies and blessings which do accompany the presence of this sort of persons, where they have you quiet habitation. And,—

Obs. I. Let the world think as well, as highly, as proudly of itself as it pleaseth, it is, when it persecutes, base and unworthy of the society of true believers, and of the mercies wherewith it is accompanied. And;—

Obs. II. God's esteem of his people is never the less for their outward sufferings and calamities whatever the world judgeth of them.—They cannot think otherwise of them in their sufferings than they thought of Christ in his. They did "esteem him stricken, smitten of God and afflicted," Isa. 53:4; as one rejected of God and man. Such is their judgment of all his suffering followers; nor will they entertain any other thought of them. But God is of another mind.

2. Having given this character of these poor sufferers, he proceeds to issue his account of their suffering, and that in a further description of that wandering course of life which he had before ascribed unto them. And first he asserts again, that they "wandered," and then gives an account of the places wherein they wandered, and where they disposed of themselves in their wanderings.

Πλανώμενοι. That which he had before expressed by περιῆλθον they "went up and down," he here doth by πλανώμενοι; that is, directly, they had an "erratical motion,"—wandered without any certain rule or end, as unto any place of rest. I showed before how they were driven from cities, boroughs, towns corporate, and villages also, partly by law, partly by force. What now remains for them to betake themselves unto but deserts, solitary and uninhabited places. But whereas the continuance of human life is not capable of rest and composure, the apostle distributes the places of their wandering state under two heads, suited unto these two acts of motion and rest. Of the first sort were "deserts and mountains," uninhabited wastes; and of the latter, were the "dens and caves" that were in them. By deserts and uninhabited mountains, all know what is intended; and they did abound in those parts of the earth wherein these things were acted. There is no need of any exact distinction of dens and caves, neither will the signification of the words afford it; though possibly one may signify greater, the other lesser subterraneous receptacles: but the common use of the first word seems to denote such hollow places under the ground as wild beasts have sheltered themselves in from the pursuit of men.

This was the state of these servants of the living God: when they were driven from all inhabited places, they found no rest in deserts and mountains, but wandered up and down, taking up dens and caves for their shelter. And instances of the same kind have been multiplied in the pagan and antichristian persecutions of the churches of the new testament.

That no colour is hence given unto a hermitical life by voluntary choice, much less unto the horrible abuse of its first invention in the Papacy, is openly evident. And we may learn, that,—

Obs. III. Ofttimes it is better, and more safe for the saints of God, to be in the wilderness among the beasts of the field, than in a savage world, inflamed by the devil into rage and persecution.

Obs. IV. Though the world may prevail to drive the church into the wilderness, to the ruin of all public profession in their own apprehension, yet it shall be there preserved unto the appointed season of its deliverance; the world shall never have the victory over it.

Obs. V. It becomes us to be filled with thoughts of and affections unto spiritual things, to labour for an anticipation of glory, that we faint not in the consideration of the evils that may befall us on the account of the gospel.

VERSES 39, 40

Καὶ οὗτοι πάντες, μαρτυρηθέντες διὰ τῆς πίστεως, οὐκ ἐκομίσαντο τὴν ἐπαγγελίαν· τοῦ Θεοῦ περὶ ἡμῶν κρεῖττόν τι προβλεψαμένου, ἵνα μὴ χωρὶς ἡμῶν τελειωθῶσι.

Ver. 39, 40.—And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise; God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.

There are, in this close of the apostle's discourse, which is an observation concerning all the instances of the faith of believers under the old testament, and his judgment concerning their state, four things considerable: 1. Who they are of whom he speaks; and that is, "All these." 2. What he allows and ascribes unto them: "They obtained a good report through faith." 3. What he yet denies unto them; which is the receiving of the promise: "They received not the promise." 4. The reason of it; which is God's sovereign disposal of the states, times, seasons, and privileges of the church: "God having provided," etc.

There is not any passage in this whole epistle that gives a clearer and more determinate sense of itself than this doth, if the design and phraseology of the apostle be attended unto with any diligence. But because some have made it

their business to bring difficulties unto it, that it might seem to comply with other false notions of their own, they must in our passage be discarded and removed out of the way.

Οἵτοι πάντες. 1. The persons spoken of are, "All these." "That is," saith Schlichtingius, "all these last spoken of, who underwent such hardships, and death itself. For they received not any such promises of deliverance as those did before mentioned, who had great success in their undertakings." He is followed in his conjecture (as almost constantly) by Grotius: "Others," saith he, "received promises, verse 33; but these did not, who could not abide peaceably in the promised land." To which Hammond adds, "They did not in this life receive the promise made to Abraham, had no deliverance in this life from their persecution."

But, under favour, there cannot be a more fond interpretation of the words, nor more contrary unto the design of the apostle. For, (1.) Those of whom he speaks in this close of his discourse, that "they obtained a good report through faith," are the same of whom he affirms in the beginning of it, verse 2, that "by faith they obtained a good report;"—that is, all those did so whom at the beginning he intended to enumerate; and all those did so whom in the close he had spoken of: of any distinction to be made between them, there is not the least intimation. (2.) It is said expressly of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, that "they received not the promises," verse 13, as well as of those now mentioned. (3.) It is one thing to "obtain promises," ἐπαγγελίας, indefinitely, promises of any sort, as some are said to do, verse 33, and another to receive τὴν ἐπαγγελίαν, that signal promise which was made unto the fathers. (4.) Nothing can be more alien from the design of the apostle, than to apply the promise intended unto temporal deliverance and freedom from suffering. For if it be so, God did not "provide some better thing for us," that is, the Christian church, than for them; for the sufferings of Christians, without deliverance from their persecutions, have been a thousand times more than those of the Jewish church under Antiochus, which the apostle hath respect unto.

Wherefore the "all these" intended, are all those who have been reckoned up and instanced in from the beginning of the world, or the giving out of the first promise concerning the Saviour and Redeemer of the church, with the destruction of the works of the devil.

Μαρτυρηθέντες διὰ τῆς πίστεως. 2. Of all these it is affirmed, that they "obtained a good report through faith." They were "well testified unto." They were God's martyrs, and he was theirs,—he gave witness unto their faith. See the exposition of verse 2. That they were all of them so testified unto upon the account of their faith, we need no other testimony but this of the apostle; yet is there no doubt but that, in the several ages of the church wherein they lived, they were renowned for their faith and the fruits of it in what they did or suffered. And,—

Obs. It is our duty also, not only to believe, that we may be justified before God, but so to evidence our faith by the fruits of it, as that we may obtain a good report, or be justified before men.

3. That which he denies concerning them, is the receiving of the promise: "They received not the promise." And what promise this was we must inquire.

(1.) It is affirmed of Abraham, that "he received the promise," verse 17. And that promise which was given, which was made unto him, is declared by the apostle to be the great fundamental promise of the gospel, Heb. 6:13–18; the same promise which is the object of the faith of the church in all ages. Whereas, therefore, it is said here that "they received not the promise," the promise formally considered, as a promise, must in the first place be intended; and in the latter it is considered materially, as unto the thing itself promised. The promise, as a faithful engagement of future good, they received; but the good thing itself was not in their days exhibited.

(2.) Some say, the promise here intended is the promise of eternal life. Hereof, they say, believers under the old testament had no promise; none made unto them, none believed by them. So judgeth Schlichtingius; who is forsaken herein by Grotius and his follower. But this we have before rejected, and the folly of the imagination hath been sufficiently detected.

(3.) Others, as these two mentioned, fix on such an account of the promise as I would not say I cannot understand, but that I am sure enough they did not understand themselves, nor what they intended; though they did so as to what they disallowed. So one of them explains, or rather involves himself, on verse 40, after he had referred this promise which they received not unto deliverance from their persecutors: "God having determined this as the most congruous time, in his wisdom, to give the utmost completion to all those prophecies and promises, to send the Messiah into the world, and, as a consequent of his resurrection from the dead, to grant us those privileges and advantages that the

fathers had not enjoyed,—a rest after long persecution, a victory over all opposers of Christ's church; that so what was promised unto Abraham's seed, Gen. 22:17, that "they should possess the gates of their enemies," being but imperfectly fulfilled to the fathers, might have the utmost completion in the victory and flourishing of the Christian faith over all the enemies thereof."

Besides what is insinuated about the effects of Christ's mediation, or consequent of his resurrection,—which whose shop it comes from we well know,—the promise here intended is expounded not to be the promise made to Abraham, which it was, but that made to his seed, of victory over all their enemies in this world; which, as it seems, they received not, because it was not completely fulfilled towards them, but is to be so unto the Christian church in the conquest of all their adversaries. And this in the verse foregoing is called a deliverance from their persecutors. But whatever this promise be, the apostle is positive that they did not receive it, but that the Christians or believers in Christ in those days had received it. But we know, that not only then, but nearly three hundred years after, Christians were more exposed to persecutions than ever the church of the Jews was; and so did less receive that promise, if any such there were, than they. Something is indeed interposed about the coming of Christ, further to cloud the business; but this is referred only unto the time and season of the accomplishment of this promise, not unto the promise itself. Wherefore such paraphrases are suited only to lead the mind of the readers from a due consideration of the design of the Holy Ghost.

(4.) It is therefore not only untrue and unsafe, but contrary unto the fundamental principles of our religion, the faith of Christians in all ages, and the design of the apostle in this whole epistle, to interpret this promise of any thing but that of the coming of Christ in the flesh, of his accomplishment of the work of our redemption, with the unspeakable privileges and advantages that the church received thereby. That this promise was made unto the elders from the beginning of the world; that it was not actually accomplished unto them, being necessarily confined unto one season, called "the fulness of time," only they had by faith the benefit of it communicated unto them; and that herein lies the great difference of the two states of the church, that under the old testament, and that under the new, with the prerogative of the latter above the former; are such sacred truths, that without an acknowledgment of them, nothing of the Old Testament or the New can be rightly understood.

This, then, was the state of believers under the old testament, as it is here represented unto us by the apostle: They had the promise of the exhibition of Christ, the Son of God, in the flesh, for the redemption of the church. This promise they received, saw afar off as to its actual accomplishment, were persuaded of the truth of it, and embraced it, verse 13. The actual accomplishment of it they desired, longed for, looked after and expected, Luke 10:24; inquiring diligently into the grace of God contained therein, 1 Pet. 1:10, 11. Hereby they enjoyed the benefits of it, even as we, Acts 15:11. Howbeit they received it not as unto its actual accomplishment in the coming of Christ. And the reason hereof the apostle gives in the next verse.

Ver. 40.—"God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect."

Having declared the victorious faith of believers under the old testament, with what it enabled them to do and suffer, and given an account of their state as unto the actual accomplishment of that promise which they lived on and trusted unto, in this last verse of this chapter he compares that state of theirs with that of believers under the gospel, giving the pre-eminence unto the latter, with the reason whence so it was. And there is in the words,—

1. The reason of the difference that was between the two states of the church; and this was God's disposal of things in this order: "God having provided." 2. The difference itself, namely, "some better thing" that was so provided for us. 3. A declaration of that better thing, in a negation of it unto them: "That they without us should not be made perfect."

In the exposition of these words, Schlichtingius proceeds on sundry principles, some whereof are embraced by his followers, as others of them are rejected by them: 1. That the promise intended, verse 39, is the promise of eternal life. 2. That under the old testament believers had no such promise, whatever hopes or conjectures they might have of it. 3. That both they and we at death do cease to be, in soul and body, until the resurrection, none entering before into eternal life. 4. He inquires hereon how God did provide some better thing for us than for them; which he pursues with such intricate curiosities as savour more of the wit of Crellius than his own. But the whole of it is senseless and foolish. For if when any one dies he is nothing, or as nothing, so as that unto him it is but as one moment between death and the resurrection, as he contends the state of all as unto eternal life and an entrance thereinto is absolutely the same, nor is the one in any thing better than the other, although

they should die thousands of years one before another. But as all these things are openly false, and contrary to the chief principles of Christian religion, so they are utterly remote from the mind of the apostle, as we shall see in the exposition of the words.

Those of the church of Rome do hence fancy a limbus, a subterraneous receptacle of souls, wherein they say the spirits of believers under the old testament were detained until after the resurrection of Christ, so as that they without us were not made perfect. But that the saints departed from the beginning of the world were excluded from rest and refreshment in the presence of God, is false and contrary unto the Scripture. However, the apostle treats not here at all about the difference between one sort of men and another after death, but of that which was between them who lived under the old testament church-state whilst they lived, and those that live under and enjoy the privileges of the new; as is evident in the very reading of the epistle, especially of the seventh chapter, and is expressly declared by himself in the next chapter to this, verses 18–24, as, God willing, we shall see on the place.

These open corruptions of the sense of the words being rejected, we may be the more brief in the exposition of them.

Τοῦ Θεοῦ προβλεψαμένου. 1. The first thing in them is the reason of the difference asserted. And that is, God's providing things in this order. The word properly signifies "foreseeing." But God's prevision is his provision, as being always accompanied with his preordination: his foresight with his decree. For "known unto him are all his works from the foundation of the world," Acts 15:18. Now this provision of God is the οἰκονομία τοῦ πληρώματος τῶν καιρῶν, Eph. 1:10,—the dispensation or ordering of the state, times, and seasons of the church, and the revelation of himself unto it; which we have opened at large on the first verse of the epistle, whereunto the reader is referred. And,—

Obs. I. The disposal of the states and times of the church, as unto the communication of light, grace, and privileges, depends merely on the sovereign pleasure and will of God, and not on any merit or preparation in man.—The coming of Christ at that time when he came was as little deserved by the men of the age wherein he came as of any age from the foundation of the world.

Obs. II. Though God gives more light and grace unto the church in one season than in another, yet in every season he gives that which is sufficient to guide believers in their faith and obedience unto eternal life.

Obs. III. It is the duty of believers, in every state of the church, to make use of and improve the spiritual provision that God hath made for them; always remembering, that unto whom much is given, of them much is required.

Κρεῖττον. 2. That which God hath thus provided for us,—that is, those who in all ages do believe in Christ as exhibited in the flesh, according to the revelation made of him in the gospel,—is called "something better;" that is, more excellent, a state above theirs, or all that was granted unto them. And we may inquire, (1.) What these "better things," or this "better thing" is; (2.) How with respect thereunto "they were not made perfect without us."

(1.) For the first, I suppose it ought to be out of question with all Christians, that it is the actual exhibition of the Son of God in the flesh, the coming of the promised Seed, with his accomplishment of the work of the redemption of the church, and all the privileges of the church, in light, grace, liberty, spiritual worship, with boldness in an access unto God, that ensued thereon, which are intended. For were not these the things which they received not under the old testament? were not these the things which were promised from the beginning; which were expected, longed for, and desired by all believers of old, who yet saw them only afar off, though through faith they were saved by virtue of them? and are not these the things whereby the church-state of the gospel was perfected and consummated, the things alone wherein our state is better than theirs? For as unto outward appearances of things, they had more glory, and costly, ceremonious splendour in their worship, than is appointed in the Christian church; and their worldly prosperity was for a long season very great, much exceeding any thing that the Christian church doth enjoy. To deny, therefore, these to be the "better things" that God provided for us, is to overthrow the faith of the old testament and the new.

Ἵνα μὴ χωρὶς ἡμῶν τελειωθῶσι. (2.) We may inquire how, with respect hereunto, it is said that "they without us were not made perfect." And I say,—

[1.] "Without us," is as much as without the things which are actually exhibited unto us, the things provided for us, and our participation of them.

[2.] They and we, though distributed by divine provision into distinct states, yet with respect unto the first promise and the renovation of it unto Abraham, are but one church, built on the same foundation, and enlivened by the same Spirit of grace. Wherefore, until we came in unto this church-state, they could not be made perfect, seeing the church-state itself was not so.

[3.] All the advantages of grace and mercy which they received and enjoyed, it was by virtue of those better things which were actually exhibited unto us, applied by faith, and not by virtue of any thing committed unto them and enjoyed by them. Wherefore,—

[4.] That which the apostle affirms is, that they were never brought unto, they never attained, that perfect, consummated spiritual state which God had designed and prepared for his church in the fulness of times, and which they foresaw should be granted unto others, and not unto themselves, 1 Pet. 1:11, 12.

[5.] What this perfect, consummated state of the church is, I have so fully declared in the exposition of the seventh chapter, where the apostle doth designedly treat of it, that it must not be here repeated; and thereunto I refer the reader.

I cannot but marvel that so many have stumbled, as most have done, in the exposition of these words, and involved themselves in difficulties of their own devising. For they are a plain epitome of the whole doctrinal part of the epistle; so as that no intelligent, judicious persons can avoid the sense which they tender, unless they divert their minds from the whole scope and design of the apostle, fortified with all circumstances and ends; which is not a way or means to assist any one in the right interpretation of the Scripture. And to close this chapter, we may observe,—

Obs. IV. God measures out unto all his people their portion in service, sufferings, privileges, and rewards, according to his own good pleasure.—And therefore the apostle shuts up this discourse of the faith, obedience, sufferings, and successes of the saints under the old testament, with a declaration that God had yet provided more excellent things for his church than any they were made partakers of. All he doth in this way is of mere grace and bounty; and therefore he may distribute all these things as he pleaseth.

Obs. V. It was Christ alone who was to give, and who alone could give, perfection or consummation unto the church.—He was in all things to have the pre-eminence.

Obs. VI. All the outward glorious worship of the old testament had no perfection in it; and so no glory comparatively unto that which is brought in by the gospel, 2 Cor. 3:10.

Obs. VII. All perfection, all consummation, is in Christ alone. For "in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily; and we are complete in him, who is the head of all principality and power."

Μόνω τῶ Θεῶ δόξα.

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CHAPTER 12

THIS chapter contains an application of the doctrine, declared and confirmed in the foregoing chapter, unto the use of the Hebrews. Doctrine and use were the apostle's method; and must, at least virtually, be theirs also who regard either sense, or reason, or experience, in their preaching. It would be an uncouth sermon that should be without doctrine and use.

And there are three general parts of the chapter: 1. A pressing of the exhortation in hand from the testimonies before insisted on, with new additional motives, encouragements, and directions, unto the end of the 11th verse. 2. A direction unto especial duties, necessary unto a due compliance with the general exhortation, and subservient unto its complete observance, verses 12–17. 3. A new cogent argument unto the same purpose, taken from a comparison between the two states, of the law and the gospel, with their original, nature, and effects; unto the end of the chapter.

In the first general part, or enforcement of the exhortation, there are four things: 1. The deduction of it from the foregoing instances and examples, verse 1. 2. The confirmation of it from the consideration of Christ himself, and his sufferings, verses 2, 3. 3. The same is pressed from their known duty, verse 4. And, 4. From the nature of the things which they were to undergo in their patient perseverance, as far as they were afflictive; with the certain advantages and benefits which they should receive by them, verses 5–11.

Hebrews 12: 1

Having insisted long on a multitude of instances, to declare and evidence the power and efficacy of faith to carry and safeguard believers through all duties and difficulties that they may be called unto in the way of their profession, he proceeds thereon to press his exhortation on the Hebrews unto a patient perseverance in the profession of the gospel, notwithstanding all the sufferings which they might meet withal. And his discourse on this subject is exceedingly

pregnant with arguments unto this purpose. For it both declares what hath been the lot of true believers in all ages from the beginning, which none ought now to be surprised with, or think strange of; what was the way whereby they so carried it as to please God; and what was the success or victory which they obtained in the end: all which were powerful motives unto them for the diligent attendance unto and discharge of their present duty.

Ver. 1.—Τονγαροῦν καὶ ἡμεῖς, τοσοῦτον ἔχοντες περικείμενον ἡμῖν νέφος μαρτύρων, ὄγκον ἀποθέμενοι πάντα καὶ τὴν εὐπερίστατον ἁμαρτίαν, δι᾽ ὑπομονῆς τρέχωμεν τὸν προκείμενον ἡμῖν ἀγῶνα.

Τονγαροῦν, "ideoque," "quamobrem," "igitur," "proinde," "quoniam;" Syr., "propter hoc," "for this cause;"—a vehement note of inference. Τοσοῦτον, etc., "we also, who have all these witnesses, who compass us about as a cloud." Περικείμενον. Vulg. Lat., "impositam nubem;" Rhem., "a cloud put upon us;"—that is, ἐπικείμενον, which here hath no place, but is very improper. Ὄγκον ἀποθέμενοι πάντα. Vulg. Lat., "deponentes omne pondus;" Rhem., "laying away all weight," for "every weight." "Abjecto omni pondere," "casting away every weight." Others, "deposito omni onere," "laying aside every burden," a weight that is burdensome, and so a hinderance. Syr., "loosing ourselves from all weight." Εὐπερίστατον ἁμαρτίαν. Vulg. Lat., "et circumstans nos peccatum;" Rhem., "and the sin that compasseth us," "that stands round us." Beza, "peccatum ad nos circumcingendos proclive:" which we render, "the sin that doth so easily beset us;" that is, to oppose and hinder us in our progress, which is to beset us. Syr., "the sin which at all times is ready for us;" that is, to act itself in us or against us. Erasmus, "tenaciter inhaerens peccatum," "the sin that doth so tenaciously inhere or cleave to us;" perhaps to the sense of the place, though it mistakes the precise signification of the word. Smid., "peccato facilè noxio," "the sin that doth so easily hurt us;" to comply with the exposition of the words which he embraceth. The mind of the Holy Ghost in this expression we must further inquire into.

Τρέχωμεν τὸν προκείμενον ἡμῖν ἀγῶνα. Vulg. Lat., "curramus ad propositum nobis certamen;" Rhem., "let us run to the fight that is proposed unto us." But ἀγών is not properly a fight; and the interposing of the preposition ad, "to," corrupts the sense: though the Syriac retaining the Greek word seems to own it, לַאגוֹנָא, "leagona," "to the race," course. But we are to run the race, not run to it. Ἀγῶνα, "stadium," "the race;" "certamen," the contest in the race or course.

Ver. 1.—Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside [cast away] every weight [or burden], and the sin that doth so easily beset [us], and let us run with patience the race that is set before us.

Some things may be observed concerning these words, as unto the manner of speech used in them; as, 1. The whole of it is figurative, consisting in sundry metaphors, drawn out of that which is the principal, namely, the comparison of our patient abiding in the profession of the gospel unto running or contending in a race for a prize. 2. That the allusions being plain and familiar, as we shall see, they convey a great light unto the understanding, and have a great efficacy upon the affections. 3. It being so, the exposition of the words is not so much to be taken from the precise signification of them, as from the matter plainly intended in them. 4. The structure of the words is pathetical, becoming an exhortation of so great importance.

There is in the words themselves, 1. A note of inference from the preceding discourse, intimating the influence which it hath into what follows: "Wherefore;"—'Seeing it is thus with us in respect unto them who went before us, whose faith is recorded for our use and example.' 2. An exhortation unto patient perseverance in the profession of the gospel, notwithstanding all difficulties and oppositions; metaphorically expressed by "running with patience the race that is set before us." 3. A motive and encouragement thereunto, taken from our present state with respect unto them who went before us in the profession of the faith, and whose example we are obliged to follow: "Seeing we also are compassed with so great a cloud of witnesses." 4. A declaration of something necessary unto a compliance with this exhortation, and the duty required in us; which is, to "cast off every weight, and the sin that doth so easily beset us."

I shall open the words in the order wherein they lie in the text.

1. The first thing expressed, is the motive and encouragement given unto our diligence in the duty exhorted unto: "Seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses." 'We having so great a cloud of witnesses placed about us.'

Καὶ ἡμεῖς. (1.) The persons spoken of are "we," "we also," or "even we." The apostle joins himself with these Hebrews, not only the better to insinuate the exhortation into their minds, by engaging himself with them, but also to intimate that the greatest and strongest of believers stand in need of this

encouragement. For it is a provision that God hath made for our benefit, and that such as is useful unto us and needful for us. Wherefore this expression, "even we," compriseth all believers that were then in the world, or shall be so to the end of it.

(2.) That which is proposed unto us is, [1.] That we have "witnesses." [2.] That we have a "cloud" of them. [3.] That they are placed "about" us, or we are "compassed" with them. These witnesses are all the saints of the old testament whose faith is recorded in the Scripture; both those mentioned by name by the apostle, and all others who in general are testified unto. And how these are said to be witnesses, with respect unto us, must be inquired into.

[1.] Witnesses are of two sorts: 1st. Such as behold the doing of any thing, and give their testimony unto it when it is done. 2dly. Such as testify unto any thing, that it ought to be done; or unto any truth that it is so, whereby men may be engaged unto what it directs unto.

If the sense of the word be to be regulated by the metaphorical expression of the duty exhorted unto, namely, running in a race, then the witnesses intended are of the first sort. For at the striving and contest in those public games which are alluded unto, there were multitudes, clouds of spectators, that looked on to encourage those that contended by their applauses, and to testify of their successes.

So is it with us in our patient perseverance; all the saints of the old testament do as it were stand looking on us in our striving, encouraging us unto our duty, and ready to testify unto our success with their applauses. They are all placed about us unto this end; we are "compassed" with them. And they are so in the Scripture; wherein they, being dead, yet see, and speak, and bear testimony. The Scripture hath encompassed us with them; so that when we are in our trials, which way soever we look in it, we may behold the face of some or other of these worthies looking on us, and encouraging of us. So the apostle chargeth Timothy with his duty, not only "before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ," unto whom he was to give his account, but "before the elect angels" also, who were to be witnesses of what he did therein, 1 Tim. 5:21. And it is not unuseful for us, in all our trials for the profession of the faith, to consider that the eyes as it were of all that have gone before us in the same, or the like, or greater trials, are upon us, to bear witness how we acquit ourselves.

But the intention of the apostle may be better taken from his general scope, which requireth that the witnesses be of the second sort, namely, such as testify unto what is to be done, and the grounds of truth whereon it ought to be done. For he intends especially the persons whom he had before enumerated: and that which they testify unto is this, that faith will carry believers safely through all that they may be called to do or suffer in the profession of the gospel; which even we, therefore, ought with all patience to abide in. They all jointly testify unto these things:—that it is best for us to believe and obey God, whatever may befall us in our so doing; that faith, where it is true and sincere, will engage those in whom it is to venture on the greatest hazards, dangers, and miseries in the world, rather than to forego their profession; and that it will safely carry us through them all. Those that testify these things are important witnesses in this cause. For when, upon the approaches of danger and trouble, it may be death itself, we are brought to contest things in our own minds, and to dispute what is best for us to do,—wherein Satan will not be wanting to increase our fears and disorders by his fiery darts,—it cannot but be an unspeakable advantage and encouragement to have all these holy and blessed persons stand about us, testifying unto the folly of our fears, the falseness of all the suggestions of unbelief, and the fraud of Satan's temptations; as also unto the excellency of the duties whereunto we are called, and the certainty of our success in them through believing.

And in this sense do I take the witnesses here intended, both because of the scope of the place, and that we know by experience of what use this kind of testimony is. But if any think better of the former sense, I shall not oppose it. For in the whole verse the apostle doth, as it were, represent believers in their profession as striving for victory as upon a theatre. Christ sits at the head or end of it, as the great agonothetes, the judge and rewarder of those that strive lawfully, and acquit themselves by perseverance unto the end. All the saints departed divinely testified unto stand and sit on every side, looking on, and encouraging us in our course; which was wont to be a mighty provocation unto men to put forth the utmost of their strength in their public contests for victory. Both these senses are consistent.

Νέφος τοσοῦτον. [2.] Of these witnesses there is said to be a "cloud;" and that not positively only, but a great cloud,—"so great a cloud." A cloud in Hebrew is called עָב; that is, "a thing thick, perplexed, or condensed." And Aristotle says, Τὸ νέφος πάχος ἀτμῶδες συνεστραμμένον, De Mundo, cap. iv.;—"A cloud is a thick conglomeration of humid vapours." So God compares the sins of his

people unto "a cloud," and "a thick cloud," because of their multitude, the vapour of them being condensed like a cloud, Isa. 44:22. And in all authors, a thick body of men, or soldiers compacted together, is usually called a cloud of them. So Hom. Iliad. 4, Ἅμα δὲ νέφος εἵπετο πεζῶν,—"With him followed a cloud of foot-men." So Livy, "Peditum equitumque nubes;"—"a cloud of horse and foot." Wherefore, "so great a cloud," is a metaphorical expression for 'so great a number:' 'so great a multitude at once appearing together to witness in this cause.' And he doth at once in this word represent unto us the force of his preceding discourse, wherein he had called out many of his witnesses by name, and then made a conglomeration or gathering of them into one body, like a great cloud, chap. 11:32–35, etc.

Περικείμενον ἡμῖν. [3.] 'This cloud,' saith he, 'we are "encompassed with,"—it is placed about us;' where and how is not expressed. But it is placed in the Scripture, wherein it is set round about us to behold. For what is done in the Scripture for our use, is immediately done unto us; and what is spoken in it, is spoken unto us. So verse 5, those words in the Book of Proverbs, "My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord," he affirms to be an exhortation spoken unto us. And the recording of those witnesses in the Scripture is the actual compassing of us with them. For our life and our walk being in the Scripture, that which is placed therein for our use, we are compassed withal.

And there is a great emphasis in the expression. For when a great multitude do encompass men, in any cause, drawing about them, and near unto them, to give them encouragement, they cannot but greatly countenance and further them in their way. So doth this cloud of witnesses them that do believe.

And as to our own instruction, we may hence observe,—

Obs. I. In all Scripture examples we are diligently to consider our own concernment in them, and what we are instructed by them.—This inference the apostle makes from the collection he had made of them: "Even we also."

Obs. II. God hath not only made provision, but plentiful provision, in the Scripture for the strengthening of our faith and our encouragement unto duty: "A cloud of witnesses."

Obs. III. It is an honour that God puts on his saints departed, especially such as suffered and died for the truth, that even after their death they shall be witnesses unto faith and obedience in all generations.—They continue, in a sense, still to be martyrs. The faithful collection of their sufferings, and of the

testimony they gave therein unto the gospel, hath been of singular use in the church. So hath the Book of Martyrs been among ourselves, though now it be despised by such as never intend to follow the examples contained in it.

Obs. IV. To faint in our profession whilst we are encompassed with such a cloud of witnesses, is a great aggravation of our sin.—These things are proposed unto us that we faint not.

2. The second thing in the words is the prescription of the means which we must use, that we may discharge the duty we are exhorted unto. And this is, that we "cast off every weight, and the sin that doth so easily beset us."

There is no doubt but that, in the exposition of these words, respect is to be had unto the metaphor whereby the apostle expresseth the duty exhorted unto; namely, that we should "run with patience the race that is set before us." Those who were to run in a race did always free themselves from all those things which might hinder them therein. And they were of two sorts: (1.) Such as were a weight or burden upon them; any thing that was heavy, which men cannot run withal. (2.) Such as might entangle them in their passage; as long clothing, which cleaving unto them, would be their continual hinderance in every step they should take. In compliance with this similitude, the apostle enjoins our duty under these two expressions, of laying aside, (1.) "Every weight;" and, (2.) "The sin that doth so easily beset us:" and what he intends in particular we must inquire, both as to the manner of laying aside, and then as to the things themselves.

Ἀποθέμενοι. (1.) The manner of the performance of this duty is expressed by "laying aside," or as others render the word, "casting away." Ἀποτίθημι is once used in the New Testament with respect unto things natural: Acts 7:58, "The witnesses ἀπέθεντο τὰ ἱμάτια αὐτῶν,"—"laid down" (that is, "put off," and laid down) "their clothes:" which gives light unto the metaphor. In all other places it is used with respect unto vicious habits, or causes of sin, which we are to part with, to cast away, as hinderances in our way and work. So Eph. 4:22, 25; Col. 3:8; James 1:21; 1 Pet. 2:1. It is the word wherewith our duty with respect unto all vicious habits of mind, especially such as are effectual hinderances in our Christian course, is expressed. For in every place where it is used it doth not absolutely respect things themselves to be laid aside, but as they are obstructions of our faith and obedience; as the apostle doth here, as we shall further see immediately. Naturally such things are signified as are in us, on us, and do cleave unto us; as are great hinderances in our Christian race. Let no man be

confident in himself. He hath nothing of his own, but what will obstruct him in his way of holy obedience. Unless these things are deposed, laid aside, cast away, we cannot run the race with success whereunto we are called. How this is to be done, shall be afterwards declared.

(2.) The words wherein the things themselves to be laid aside are expressed being metaphorical, and not used anywhere else in the Scripture unto the same purpose, occasion hath been taken for various conjectures about their sense and precise intendment. Especially the last word, εὐπερίστατος, being used but this once in the New Testament, and scarce, if at all, in any other author, hath given advantage unto many to try their critical skill to the utmost. I shall not concern myself in any of them, to approve or refute them. Those which are agreeable unto the analogy of faith may be received as any shall see reason. This I know, that the true exposition of those words, or the application of them unto the purpose intended, is to be taken from other Scripture rules, given in the same case and unto the same end, with the experience of them who have been exercised with trials for the profession of the gospel. These I shall attend unto alone in the interpretation of them; which will give us a sense no way inconsistent with the precise signification of the words themselves, which is all that is necessary.

Ὄγκον πάντα. [1.] That which we are first to lay aside, is "every weight." The expression will scarce allow that this should be confined unto any one thing, or things of any one kind. No more seems to be intended, but that we part with every thing, of what kind soever it be, which would hinder us in our race. And so it is of the same importance with the great command of self-denial, which our Saviour gives in such strict charge to all who take on them the profession of the gospel, as that without which they would not persevere therein, Matt. 16:24, 25. We may have the cross laid upon us, whether we will or no, but we cannot take it up, so as to follow Christ, unless we first deny ourselves. And to deny ourselves herein, or to this purpose of taking up the cross, is to take off our minds from the esteem and value of all things that would hinder us in our evangelical progress. This is to "lay aside every weight" in a metaphorical expression, with respect unto our obedience as a race. And as this sense is coincident with that great gospel-rule given us in the same case, so it is suited unto the experience of them that are called to suffer. They find that the first thing which they have to do, is universally to deny themselves; which if they can attain unto, they are freed from every weight, and are expedite in their course. And this exposition we may abide in.

But because there is another great gospel rule in the same case, which restrains this self-denial unto one sort of things, which the word seems to point unto, and which falls in also with experience, it may have here an especial regard. And this rule we may learn from the words of our Saviour also, Matt. 19:23, 24, "Jesus said unto his disciples, Verily I say unto you, That a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven. And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God." Nothing but the exceeding greatness of the power of God and his grace can carry a rich man safely, in a time of suffering, unto heaven and glory. And it is confirmed by the apostle, 1 Tim. 6:9, 10, "But they that will be rich fall into temptation, and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition," etc. The riches of this world, and the love of them, are a peculiar obstruction unto constancy in the profession of the gospel, on many accounts. These, therefore, seem to be a burden, hindering us in our race in an especial manner.

And these things are called a "weight," not from their own nature, for they are light as vanity, but from the consequent of our setting our hearts and affections upon them. When we so embrace them, so adhere unto them, as to take them into our minds and affections, they are a weight wherewith no man is able to run a Christian race. If when we are called to sufferings, the love of this world, and the things of it, with our lives in the enjoyment of them, be prevalent in us, we shall find them such a weight upon us as will utterly disenable us unto our duty. A man may burden himself with feathers or chaff, as well as with things in themselves more ponderous.

That which remains unto the exposition of these words, is, how this weight should be laid aside; which although it be the principal thing to be regarded, yet is it wholly overseen by expositors, as most things practical are.

Suppose the weight to be laid aside to be the good things of this life, with the engagement of our affections unto them; then unto this laying them aside,—

1st. It is not ordinarily required that we should absolutely part with them, and forego our lawful possession of them: I say, it is not so ordinarily. But there have been, and may be seasons, wherein that direction of our Saviour unto the young man, "Go sell what thou hast, and give to the poor, and follow me," must take place. So many in the primitive times sold their possessions, distributing what they had to the poor, Acts 4. And that example may be obliging, where there is a coincidence of great persecution in any one nation, and great

opportunities of propagating the gospel elsewhere, as the case then was. But ordinarily this is not required of us. Yea, there are times wherein some men's enjoyments and possession of riches may be no hinderance unto themselves, and of great use unto the whole church, by their contributions unto its relief; which are frequently directed by the apostles. And in the discharge of this duty will lie a decretory determination of the sincerity of their faith and profession.

2dly. This laying them aside includes a willingness, a readiness, a resolution, to part with them cheerfully for the sake of Christ and the gospel, if called thereunto. So was it with them that "took joyfully the spoiling of their goods." When this resolution is prevalent in the mind, the soul will be much eased of that weight of those things which would hinder it in its race. But whilst our hearts cleave unto them with an undue valuation, whilst we cannot attain unto a cheerful willingness to have them taken from us, or to be taken ourselves from them, for the sake of the gospel, they will be an intolerable burden unto us in our course. For hence will the mind dispute every dangerous duty, hearken to every sinful contrivance for safety, be surprised out of its own power by every appearing danger, and be discomposed in its frame on all occasions. Such a burden can no man carry in a race.

3dly. Sedulous and daily mortification of our hearts and affections, with respect unto all things of this nature, is that which is principally prescribed unto us in this command of laying them aside as a weight. This will take out of them whatever is really burdensome unto us. Mortification is the dissolution of the conjunction or league that is between our affections and earthly things, which alone gives them their weight and cumbrance. See Col. 3:1–5. Where this grace and duty are in their due exercise, these things cannot influence the mind into any disorder, nor make it unready for its race, or unwieldy or inexpedite in it. This is that which is enjoined us in this expression; and therefore, to declare the whole of the duty required of us, it were necessary the nature of mortification in general, with its causes, means, and effects, should be opened; which because I have done elsewhere at large, I shall here omit.

4thly. There is required hereunto continual observation of what difficulties and hinderances these things are apt to cast on our minds, either in our general course, or with respect unto particular duties. They operate on our minds by love, fear, care, delight, contrivances, with a multitude of perplexing thoughts about them. Unless we continually watch against all these ways of engaging our minds, to obviate their insinuations, we shall find them a weight and burden in all parts of our race.

These are some of the ways and means whereby those who engage their hearts unto a constant, patient perseverance in the profession of the gospel, may so far lay aside the weight of earthly things, and disentangle their affections from them, as that they may comfortably pass on, and go through with their engagement.

And the days wherein we live will give us a better understanding of the duty here prescribed unto us, than any we are likely to learn from the conjectures of men at ease about the precise signification of this or that word, which, being metaphorically used, is capable of various applications. But the world is at present filled with fears, dangers, and persecutions, for the gospel. Those who will live godly in Christ Jesus must expect persecution. Loss of goods, estates, liberties, lives, are continually before them. They, and no others, know how far the minds of believers are solicited with these things, what impressions they make on them, and what encumbrance they design to be, and in some measure are, unto them in their progress; and they alone understand what it is to lay aside the weight of them, in the exercise of the graces and duties before mentioned. Faith, prayer, mortification, a high valuation of things invisible and eternal, a continual preference of them unto all things present and seen, are enjoined in this word, of "laying aside every weight."

Τήν ἁμαρτίαν εὐπερίστατον. [2.] The second thing to be laid aside, is "the sin that doth so easily beset us." I intimated before, that by reason this word is nowhere else used in the whole Scripture, many have multiplied their conjectures concerning the meaning of it. I shall, without any great examination of them, make that inquiry into the mind of the Holy Ghost herein which God shall direct and enable unto.

1st. The great variety of translations in rendering the word make it apparent that no determinate sense could be gathered from its precise signification. For otherwise, both in its original and its double composition, the words themselves are ordinary, and of common use. See the various translations before mentioned, whereunto many others may be added, scarce two agreeing in the same words.

2dly. We may be satisfied that no bare consideration of the word, either as simple, or in its composition, or its use in other authors, will of itself give us the full and proper signification of it in this place. And it is evident unto me from hence, in that those who have made the most diligent inquisition into it, and traced it through all its forms, are most remote from agreeing what is, or

should be the precise signification of it, but close their disquisitions with various and opposite conjectures. And, which is yet worse, that which mostly they fix upon is but a sound of words, which conveys no real sense unto the experience of them that do believe. Howbeit, it was no part of the design of the apostle to give us a perplexity, by the use of an ambiguous word; but the thing he intended was at that time commonly known, and not obscured by the new clothing given it, to accommodate the expression of it unto the present metaphor.

3dly. I shall therefore attend unto the guides before mentioned, namely, other Scripture directions and rules in the same case, with the experience of believers, who are exercised in it, and the use of those other words with which this ἅπαξ λεγόμενον is here joined.

1st. The word ἀποτίθημι, to "lay aside," is never used in the Scripture, with respect unto that which is evil and sinful, but with regard unto the original depravation of nature, and the vicious habits wherein it consists, with the effects of them. The places are these alone: Eph. 4:22, Ἀποθέσθαι ὑμᾶς,—"That ye put off, concerning the former conversation, the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts." None doubts but that it is the original pravity of our nature that is here intended. Verse 25, Διὸ ἀποθέμενοι τὸ ψεῦδος, —"Wherefore put away lying;" a branch springing from the same root. Col. 3:8, Νυνὶ δὲ ἀποθέσθε καὶ ὑμεῖς τὰ πάντα,—"But now ye also put off all these;" that is, the things which he discourseth of, or original corruption, with all the fruits and effects of it. James 1:21, Διὸ ἀποθέμενοι πᾶσαν ῥυπαρίαν,—"Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness;" which is the same. 1 Pet. 2:1, Ἀποθέμενοι οὖν πᾶσαν κακίαν,—"Laying aside all malice;" to the same purpose. Elsewhere this word is not used. It is therefore evident, that in all other places it is applied only unto our duty and acting with reference unto the original pravity of our nature, with the vicious habits wherein it consists, and the sinful effects or consequents of it. And why it should have another intention here, seeing that it is not only suited unto the analogy of faith, but most agreeable unto the design of the apostle, I know not. And the truth is, the want of a due consideration of this one word, with its use, which expositors have universally overlooked, hath occasioned many fruitless conjectures on the place.

2dly. The general nature of the evil to be deposed or laid aside, is expressed by ἁμαρτία, and that with the article prefixed, τὴν ἁμαρτίαν, "that sin." Now this, if there be nothing to limit it, is to be taken in its largest, most usual, and eminent signification. And that this is the original depravation of our nature, cannot be denied. So it is in an especial manner stated, Rom. 7, where it is

constantly called by that name: Verse 13, ἡ ἁμαρτία, "sin;" that is, the sin of our nature. And the ἡ οἰκοῦσα ἐν ἐμοὶ ἁμαρτία, verse 17, "the sin that dwelleth in me," is of the same force and signification with ἡ ἁμαρτία εὐπερίστατος, "the sin that doth so easily beset us;" though the allusions are various, the one taken from within, the other from without. See verses 20, 23. But,—

3dly. I do not judge that original sin is here absolutely intended, but only with respect unto an especial way of exerting its efficacy, and unto a certain end; namely, as it works by unbelief to obstruct us in, and turn us away from, the profession of the gospel. And so the instruction falls in with the rule given us in the same case in other places of the epistle; as chap. 3:12, "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God." To depart from the living God, and to forsake the course of our profession, are the same. And the cause of them is, an "evil heart of unbelief." For so it is expounded in the next verse, "That ye be not hardened through the deceitfulness of sin." And the like rule is given us in this chapter, verse 15. The sin therefore intended is indwelling sin; which, with respect unto the profession of the gospel and permanency therein with patience, worketh by unbelief; whereby it exposeth us unto all sorts of temptations, gives advantage unto all disheartening, weakening, discouraging considerations, still aiming to make us faint, and so at length to depart from the living God.

These things being fixed, it is all one whether we interpret εὐπερίστατος, "that which doth easily beset us," that is in a readiness always so to do; or "that doth easily expose us to evil;" which are the two senses of the word with any probability contended for. Both come to the same.

There are two things yet remaining for the exposition of these words: 1st. How this sin is said easily to beset us; and, 2dly. How we must lay it aside.

1st. And the first is spoken of it, because it hath all advantages to solicit and draw off our minds from this duty, as also to weaken us in the discharge of it. This is confirmed by the experience of all who have been exercised in this case, who have met with great difficulties in, and have been called to suffer for the profession of the gospel. Ask of them what they have found in such cases to be their most dangerous enemy, what hath had the most easy and frequent access unto their minds, to disturb and dishearten them, of the power whereof they have been most afraid: they will all answer with one voice, it is the evil of their own unbelieving hearts. This hath continually attempted to entangle them, to betray them, in taking part with all outward temptations. When this is

conquered, all things are plain and easy unto them. It may be, some of them have had their particular temptations, which they may reflect upon; but any other evil by sin, which is common unto them all, as this is unto all in the like case, they can fix on none. And this known experience of the thing in this case I prefer before all conjectures at the signification of the word, made by men who either never suffered, or never well considered what it is so to do.

This sin is that which hath an easy access unto our minds, unto their hinderance in our race, or doth easily expose us unto danger, by the advantage which it hath unto these ends. For,—

(1st.) It is always present with us, and so never wanting unto any occasion. It stands in need of no help or furtherance from any outward advantages to attempt our minds. Dwelling in us, abiding with us, cleaving unto us, it is always ready to clog, to hinder and disturb us. Doth any difficulty or danger appear in the way? it is at hand to cry, "Spare thyself," working by fear. Is any sinful compliance proposed unto us? it is ready to argue for its embracement, working by carnal wisdom. Doth the weariness of the flesh decline perseverance in necessary duties? it wants not arguments to promote its inclinations, working by the dispositions of remaining enmity and vanity. Doth the whole matter and cause of our profession come into question, as in a time of severe persecution? it is ready to set all its engines on work for our ruin; fear of danger, love of things present, hopes of recovery, reserves for a better season, the examples of others esteemed good and wise, shall all be put into the hands of unbelief, to be managed against faith, patience, constancy and perseverance.

(2dly.) It hath this advantage, because it hath a remaining interest in all the faculties of our souls. It is not in us as a disease that attempts and weakens one single part of the body, but as an evil habit that infects and weakens the whole. Hence it hath a readiness to oppose all the actings of grace in every faculty of the soul. "The flesh," always and in all things, "lusteth against the Spirit." But the whole discourse, which I have long since published, of the Nature and Power of the Remainders of Indwelling Sin in Believers, being only a full exposition of this expression, "The sin that doth so easily beset us," I shall not further here again insist on it.

2dly. The last inquiry is, how we may "lay it aside," or put it from us. One learned man thinks it a sufficient reason to prove that the sin of nature is not here intended, because we cannot lay that aside whilst we are in this life. But I have showed that the word is never used, when a duty is in it enjoined unto us, but it is with respect unto this sin. Wherefore,—

(1st.) We are to lay it aside absolutely and universally, as unto design and endeavour. We cannot in this life attain unto perfection in holiness, yet this is that which we are to endeavour all the days of our lives: so, though we cannot absolutely and perfectly destroy the body of death, crucify the old man in its lusts utterly by a total death, and so lay aside indwelling sin, yet it is our duty to be endeavouring of it all our days. So the apostle proposeth both these equally unto us, 2 Cor. 7:1, "Let us cleanse ourselves from all pollution of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." We must equally watch unto both, and work for both, though in neither we can attain absolute perfection in this life. This we are always to aim at, and pray for, 1 Thess. 5:23.

(2dly.) We ought actually to lay it aside in such a measure and degree, as that it may not be a prevalent hinderance unto us in any of the duties of Christian obedience. For it may have various degrees of power and efficacy in us, and hath so, according as it is neglected or is continually mortified. And it ofttimes takes advantage, by a conjunction with outward temptations, unto our unspeakable prejudice. We ought to labour in the lessening of these degrees, in the weakening of its strength, so as that, although it will fight and rebel against the law of the Spirit of life in our minds, it shall not prevail to hinder, entangle, or weaken us in any spiritual duty, nor either so vex us or defile us as to deprive us of that holy confidence in our walk before God which we ought to preserve. And this is actually attainable in this life; and it is from our woful neglect and sin, where it is otherwise. And if the mortification of it be neglected in any one branch, or any of its puttings forth of power, if any one sin be indulged unto, it will ruin all strength and resolution in and for suffering on the account of the gospel. So we see by daily experience; one is ruined by one lust, another by another. Hence after the apostle hath given in charge this mortification in general, he applies it unto all sorts of particular sins, Eph. 4:22–32. And we may observe,—

Obs. V. That universal mortification of sin is the best preparative, preservative, and security, for constancy in profession in a time of trial and persecution.—Whatever may be our purposes, resolution, and contrivances, if

unmortified sin in any prevalent degree, as love of the world, fear of man, sensual inclinations to make provision for the flesh, do abide in us, we shall never be able to hold out in our race unto the end.

Obs. VI. Whereas the nature of this sin, at such seasons, is to work by unbelief towards a departure from the living God, or the relinquishment of the gospel and profession of it, we ought to be continually on our watch against all its arguings and actings towards that end.—And no small part of our spiritual wisdom consists in the discovery of its deceitful working; which the apostle gives us severe cautions about, Heb. 3. And the way whereby it principally manifests itself, is by the clogs and hinderances which it puts upon us in the constant course of our obedience. Hence many think, that whereas it is said "easily to beset us," that is, unto our let and hinderance, an allusion is taken from a long garment; which if a man wear in the running of a race, it will hinder, perplex, and entangle him, and sometimes cast him to the ground; so that unless he cast it away he can have no success in his race.

3. The last thing expressed is the duty itself directed and exhorted unto, "Let us run with patience the race that is set before us." What is the duty in general intended hath been sufficiently declared; but whereas the terms wherein it is expressed, all but that word, "with patience," are metaphorical, they must be opened.

Ἀγῶνα. (1.) That with respect whereunto we are exhorted, is ἀγών, "certamen,"—"a strife or conflict." It is used for any thing, work or exercise, about which there is a striving and contending unto the utmost of men's abilities,—such as were used when men contended for mastery and victory in the Olympic games: and so it is applied unto all earnest spiritual endeavours in any kind, Phil. 1:30; Col. 2:1; 1 Thess. 2:2; 1 Tim. 6:12. In all which places it is used to express the earnest endeavours of the preachers and ministers of the gospel for the conversion of souls and edification of the church, in the midst of all difficulties, and against all oppositions. And the apostle expresseth the whole course of his ministry and obedience by it, 2 Tim. 4:7, Τὸν ἀγῶνα τὸν καλὸν ἠγώνισμαι: which we render, "I have fought a good fight;" 'I have gone through that contest, against all oppositions, which is allotted unto me, unto a victory.' Here the sense of the word is restrained unto the particular instance of a race, because we are enjoined to run it; which is the means of success in a race. But it is such a race as is for a victory, for our lives and souls; wherein the utmost of our strength and diligence is to be put forth. It is not merely "cursus," but "certamen." And by the verb our whole contest for heaven is expressed, Luke

13:24, Ἀγωνίζεσθε εἰσελθεῖν,—"Strive to enter." We render it, "striving for the mastery," 1 Cor. 9:25; where the apostle hath the same allusion unto the Olympic games. And in the same allusion it is called a "wrestling." Ἔστιν ἡμῖν ἡ πάλη, —"There is a wrestling assigned unto us," appointed for us, Eph. 6:12; which was the principal contest in the old trials for mastery. And what is required thereunto the apostle doth most excellently declare in that place, verses 10–13. Wherefore sundry things are intimated in this metaphorical expression, of our Christian obedience and perseverance therein.

[1.] That it is a matter of great difficulty, whereunto the utmost exercise of our spiritual strength is required. Contending with all our might must be in it; without which all expectation of success in a race for mastery is vain and foolish. Hence the apostle prescribes, as a means of it, that we be "strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might," Eph. 6:10; giving us his own example in a most eminent manner, 1 Cor. 9:24–27.

[2.] It is such a race as wherein we have all those things to consider which they had who strove for mastery in those games, from whence the allusion is taken: as there is the judge or βραβευτής, the "rewarder" of them which overcome,—which is Christ himself; and there is the reward proposed,—which, as the apostle tells us, is an incorruptible crown of glory; and there are encouraging spectators, even all the holy angels above, and the church below; with sundry other things which might be usefully improved.

[3.] It being a race, it is of no advantage for any one merely to begin or make an entrance into it. Every one knows that all is lost in a race, where a man doth not hold out unto the end.

Προκείμενον ἡμῖν. (2.) This race is said to be "set before us." It is not what we fall into by chance, it is not of our own choice or projection; but it is set before us. He that sets it before us is Christ himself, who calls us unto faith and obedience. And a double act of his is intended in this setting of the race before us: [1.] Preparation, or his designing, preparing, and appointing of it. He hath determined what shall be the way of obedience, limiting the bounds of it, and ordering the whole course, with all and every one of the duties that belong thereunto. There are races that men have chosen, designed, prepared for themselves; which they run with all earnestness. Such are the ways of will-worship, superstition, and blind, irregular devotion, that the world abounds with. Believers attend unto that race alone which Christ hath designed and prepared for them; which is therefore straight and holy. [2.] Proposition: it is by

him proposed unto us, it is set before us in the gospel. Therein he declares the whole nature of it, and all the circumstances that belong unto it. He gives us a full prospect of it, of all the duties required in it, and all the difficulties we shall meet withal in the running of it. He hides nothing from us, especially not that of bearing the cross; that our entrance into it may be an act of our own choice and judgment. Whatever, therefore, we meet withal in it, we can have no cause of tergiversation or complaint. And both these he confirms by his own example, as the apostle shows in the next verse. This is that which believers both reprove and refresh themselves withal, when at any time they fall into tribulation for the gospel. 'Why do you faint? why do you recoil? Hath he deceived you, who calls you to follow him in obedience? Did he hide any thing from you? Did he not set these tribulations before you, as part of the race that you were to run?' So they argue themselves into a holy acquiescency in his wisdom and will.

This is the great encouragement and assurance of believers in their whole course of obedience, that whatever they are called unto is appointed for them and prescribed unto them by Jesus Christ. Hence the apostle affirms, that he did not "fight uncertainly, as one beating the air," because he had an assured path and course set before him. 'This is that which Christ hath appointed for me; this is that which at my first call he proposed to me, and set before me,' are soul-quieting considerations.

(3.) Our whole evangelical obedience being compared to a race, our performance of it is expressed by "running," which is proper and necessary unto a race. And the obedience of faith is often so expressed: Ps. 119:32; Cant. 1:4; Isa. 40:31; 1 Cor. 9:24; Gal. 2:2; Phil. 2:16; Gal. 5:7. And there are two things required unto running: [1.] Strength; [2.] Speed; the one unto it, the other in it. There is nothing that more strength is required unto than unto running in a race: "Rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race," Ps. 19:5. He had need be a strong man, who undertakes to run a race for a prize or victory. And speed is included in the signification of the word. To "run," is to go swiftly and speedily. The first is opposed unto weakness, and the other to sloth and negligence. And these are the things required unto our Christian race: [1.] Strength in grace; [2.] Diligence with exercise. The due performance of gospel obedience, especially in the times of trial and temptation, is not a thing of course, is not to be attended in an ordinary manner. Spiritual strength, put forth in our utmost diligence, is required unto it.

Seeing, therefore, that we are called unto the running of a race, we should greatly consider the things which may enable us so to do, that we may "so run as that we may obtain." But our weakness, through our want of improving the principles of spiritual life, and our sloth in the exercise of grace, for the most part, cannot sufficiently be bewailed; and I am sure are inconsistent with this exhortation of the apostle.

Δι᾽ ὑπομονῆς. (4.) The last thing to be considered in the words, is the necessary adjunct or concomitant of this running the race, namely, that it be "with patience." Patience is either a quiet, submissive suffering of evil things, or a quiet waiting for good things future with perseverance and continuance, unto the conquest of the one, or the enjoyment of the other. The word here used is by most translated "tolerantia," and so principally respects the suffering of evil and persecution, which they were to undergo. But these things may be distinguished, though they cannot be separated, where patience is a fruit of faith. He who suffereth quietly, submissively, with content and satisfaction, what he is called unto for the profession of the gospel, doth also quietly wait for and expect the accomplishment of the promises made unto them which so suffer, which are great and many.

There are sundry things supposed unto this prescription of patience in our race; as, [1.] That the race is long, and of more than ordinary continuance. So it is, and so it seems unto all that are engaged in it. [2.] That we shall be sure to meet with difficulties, oppositions, and temptations in this race. [3.] That these things will solicit us to desist, and give over our race. With respect unto them all, patience is prescribed unto us; which, when it hath its "perfect work," will secure us in them all. See the exposition on chap. 6:12, 15. And,—

Obs. VII. The reward that is proposed at the end of this race is every way worthy of all the pains, diligence, and patience, that are to be taken and exercised in the attainment of it.

Hebrews 12: 2

The apostle here riseth unto the highest direction, encouragement, and example, with respect unto the same duty, whereof we are capable. Hitherto he hath proposed unto us their example who had and professed the same faith with ourselves; now, he proposeth Him who is the author and finisher of that faith in us all. And therefore their faith is only proposed unto us for our imitation; his person is proposed unto us as a ground also of hope and expectation.

Ver. 2.—Ἀφορῶντες εἰς τὸν τῆς πίστεως ἀρχηγὸν καὶ τελειωτὴν Ἰησοῦν· ὃς ἀντὶ τῆς προκειμένης αὐτῷ χαρᾶς, ὑπέμεινε σταυρὸν, αἰσχύνης καταφρονήσας, ἐν δεξιᾷ τε τοῦ θρόνου τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐκάθισεν.

Ἀφορῶντες. Vulg. Lat., "aspicientes;" Eras., "respicientes;" Bez., "intuentes;" Syr., וְנֶחוּר, "et respiciamus;" "looking:" we want a word to express that act of intuition which is intended.

Εἰς, "in," "ad;" "on, unto;" "looking on;" or as we better, "unto."

Ἀρχηγόν. Vulg. Lat., "auctorem," the "author;" "ducem," the "captain," the "leader." Syr., דְּהַו הֲוָא רֵישָׁא, "who was," or "who was made, the beginning," or "the prince."

Τελειωτήν, "consummatorem," "perfectorem." Syr., גָּמוּרָא, "the completer" or "perfecter." Rhem., "the consummator," "the finisher." The word is commonly used in this epistle for that which is complete or perfect in its kind.

Ἀντί is omitted by the Vulg.; and the sentence is rendered by the Rhem., "who, joy being proposed unto him." "Pro," it may be for ἕνεκα. The meaning of it must be considered.

Προκειμένης αὐτῷ. Syr., דְּאִית הֲוָא לֵהּ, "which he had," which was unto him, proposed unto him.

Αἰσχύνης καταφρονήσας. Vulg. Lat., "confusione contemptâ." Rhem., "contemning confusion." Syr., וְעַל בְּהַתְתָּא אַמְסַר, "and exposed himself unto confusion." "He despised the shame." "Ignominiâ contemptâ," "scornful shame."

Ver. 2.—Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of the faith; who, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Herein, as I said, the apostle issues his encouraging exhortation unto perseverance in the faith and obedience of the gospel. He had before gathered up particular instances for our example, from the beginning of the world. And he chose out those persons which were most eminent, and those things wherein their faith was most eminent, wherein they have witnessed unto the truth which he confirms. Some did it by doing, and some by suffering; some one way, some another. But he ascends now unto Him who had all in himself, and gave a universal example of faith and obedience in every kind. From our companions in believing he leads us unto "the author and finisher of our faith." And therefore he doth not propose him unto us in the same manner as he did the best of them, as mere examples, and that in this or that particular act of duty; but he proposeth his person in the first place, as the object of our faith, from

whom we might expect aid and assistance for conformity unto himself, in that wherein he is proposed as our example. And I shall first open the words, and then show wherein the force of the apostle's argument and exhortation doth consist.

Ἀφορῶντες. 1. There is a peculiar way or manner of our respect unto him prescribed; which is not so with respect unto the witnesses before called out. This is "looking" to him. And being put in the present tense, a continued act is intended. In all that we do, in our profession and obedience, we are constantly to be looking unto Christ.

"Looking," in the Scripture, when it respects God or Christ, denotes an act of faith or trust, with hope and expectation. It is not a mere act of the understanding, or consideration of what we look on; but it is an act of the whole soul in faith and trust. See Ps. 34:4–6. Isa. 45:22, "Look unto him, and be saved, all the ends of the earth;" that is, by faith and trust in him. Such is the look of believers on Christ as pierced, Zech. 12:10. See Heb. 11:10, 9:28. Mic. 7:7, "I will look unto the LORD; I will wait for the God of my salvation: my God will hear me."

Wherefore the Lord Jesus is not proposed here unto us as a mere example to be considered of by us; but as him also in whom we place our faith, trust, and confidence, with all our expectation of success in our Christian course. Without this faith and trust in him, we shall have no benefit or advantage by his example.

And the word here used so expresseth a looking unto him, as to include a looking off from all other things which might be discouragements unto us. Such are the cross, oppositions, persecutions, mockings, evil examples of apostates, contempt of all these things by the most. Nothing will divert and draw off our minds from discouraging views of these things but faith and trust in Christ. Look not unto these things in times of suffering, but look unto Christ. Wherefore,—

Obs. I. The foundation of our stability in faith and profession of the gospel, in times of trial and suffering, is a constant looking unto Christ, with expectation of aid and assistance; he having encouraged us unto our duty by his example, as in the following words.—Nor shall we endure any longer than whilst the eye of our faith is fixed on him. From him alone do we derive our refreshments in all our trials.

2. The object of this act or duty is proposed unto us: (1.) By his name, "Jesus." (2.) By his office or work; "the author and finisher of our faith."

Εἰς Ἰησοῦν. (1.) He is here proposed unto us by the name of "Jesus." I have before observed more than once, that the apostle in this epistle makes mention of him by all the names and titles thereby he is called in the Scripture, sometimes by one, and sometimes by another; and in every place there is some peculiar reason for the name which he makes use of. The name Jesus minds us of him as a Saviour and a sufferer: the first, by the signification of it, Matt. 1:21; the latter, in that it was that name alone whereby he was known and called in all his sufferings in life and death,—that is, in that nature signified in that name. As such, under this blessed consideration of his being a Saviour and a sufferer, are we here commanded to look unto him: and this very name is fall of all encouragements unto the duty exhorted unto. Look unto him as he was Jesus; that is, both the only Saviour and the greatest sufferer.

Τὸν τῆς πίστεως ἀρχηγὸν καὶ τελειωτήν. (2.) He is proposed by his office or work: "The author and finisher of our faith." He is so, and he alone is so; and he may be said so to be on various accounts.

[1.] Of procurement and real efficiency. He by his obedience and death procured this grace for us. It is "given unto us on his account," Phil. 1:29. And he prays that we may receive it, John 17:19, 20. And he works it in us, or bestows it on us, by his Spirit, in the beginning and all the increases of it from first to last. Hence his disciples prayed unto him, "Lord, increase our faith," Luke 17:5. See Gal. 2:20. So he is the "author" or beginner of our faith, in the efficacious working of it in our hearts by his Spirit; and "the finisher" of it in all its effects, in liberty, peace, and joy, and all the fruits of it in obedience: for "without him we can do nothing."

[2.] He may be said to be so with respect unto the revelation of the object of our faith, that which under the gospel we are bound to believe. So "grace and truth came by him," in that "no man hath seen God at any time, the only-begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him," John 1:17, 18. So he affirms of himself, "I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world," John 17:6. And in distinction from all revelations made by the prophets of old, it is said, that "in these last days God hath spoken unto us by his Son," Heb. 1:1, 2. Hence he is called "The apostle of our profession," Heb. 3:1. See the exposition. So he began it, or was the author of that faith which is peculiarly evangelical, in his prophetical office,—the word

which "began to be spoken by the Lord," Heb. 2:3; and which he hath so finished and completed that nothing can be added thereunto. But this alone is not sufficient to answer these titles. For if it were, Moses might be called the author, if not the finisher also, of the faith of the old testament.

[3.] Some think that respect may be had unto the example which he set us in the obedience of faith, in all that we are called to do or suffer by it or on the account of it. And it was so, a full and complete example unto us; but this seems not to be intended in these expressions, especially considering that his example is immediately by itself proposed unto us.

[4.] He is so by guidance, assistance, and direction. And this is certainly intended; but it is included in that which was in the first place insisted on.

It is true, that in all these senses our faith from first to last is from Jesus Christ. But that [mentioned] in the first place is the proper meaning of the words; for they both of them express an efficiency, a real power and efficacy, with respect unto our faith. Nor is it faith objectively that the apostle treats of, the faith that is revealed, but that which is in the hearts of believers. And he is said to be "the author and finisher of the faith;" that is, of the faith treated on in the foregoing chapter, in them that believed under the old testament, as well as in themselves. And,—

Obs. II. It is a mighty encouragement unto constancy and perseverance in believing, that He in whom we do believe is "the author and finisher of our faith."—He both begins it in us, and carries it on unto perfection. For although the apostle designs peculiarly to propose his sufferings unto us for this end, yet he also shows from whence his example in them is so effectual, namely, from what he is and doth with respect unto faith itself.

Obs. III. The exercise of faith on Christ, to enable us unto perseverance under difficulties and persecutions, respects him as a Saviour and a sufferer, as the author and finisher of faith itself.

Ἀντὶ τῆς προκειμένης αὐτῷ χαρᾶς. 3. The next thing in the words, is the ground or reason whereon Jesus did and suffered the things wherein he is proposed as our example unto our encouragement; and this was, "for the joy that was set before him."

Ἀντί. The ambiguous signification of the preposition ἀντί hath given occasion unto a peculiar interpretation of the words. For most commonly it signifies, "in the stead of," one thing for another. Thereon this sense of the words is conceived, 'Whereas all glory and joy therein did belong unto him, yet

he parted with it, laid it aside; and instead thereof chose to suffer with ignominy and shame.' So it is the same with Phil. 2:5–8. But there is no reason to bind up ourselves unto the ordinary use of the word, when the contexture wherein it is placed requires another sense not contrary thereunto. Wherefore it denotes here the final moving cause in the mind of Jesus Christ for the doing what he did. He did it on the account of "the joy that was set before him." And we are to inquire, (1.) What this "joy" was; and, (2.) How it was "set before him."

Τῆς χαρᾶς. (1.) "Joy" is taken for the things wherein he did rejoice; which he so esteemed and valued as on the account of them to "endure the cross and despise the shame;" that is, say some, his own glorious exaltation. But this is rather a consequent of what he did, than the motive to the doing of it; and as such is expressed in the close of the verse. But this joy which was set before him, was the glory of God in the salvation of the church. The accomplishment of all the counsels of divine wisdom and grace, unto the eternal glory of God, was set before him; so was the salvation of all the elect. These were the two things that the mind of Christ valued above life, honour, reputation, all that was dear unto him. For the glory of God herein was and is the soul and centre of all glory, so far as it consists in the manifestation of the infinite excellencies of the divine nature, in their utmost exercise limited by infinite wisdom. This the Lord Christ preferred before, above, and beyond all things. And that the exaltation of it was committed unto him, was a matter of transcendent joy unto him. And so his love unto the elect, with his desire of their eternal salvation, was inexpressible. These things were the matter of his joy. And they are contained both of them in the promise, Isa. 53:10–12, "When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand," etc. See how he expresseth his joy herein, Heb. 10:5–9, with the exposition.

(2.) Our second inquiry is, How was joy "set before him?" It is an act, or acts of God the Father, the sovereign Lord of this whole affair, that is intended. And respect may be had unto three things herein: [1.] The eternal constitution of God, that his suffering and obedience should be the cause and means of these things; namely, the eternal glory of God, and the salvation of the church. In this eternal decree, in this counsel of the divine will, perfectly known unto Jesus Christ, was this joy set before him, as unto the absolute assurance of its accomplishment. [2.] Unto the covenant of redemption between the Father and the Son, wherein these things were transacted and agreed, as we have at large elsewhere declared. [3.] To all the promises, prophecies and predictions, that

were given out by divine revelation, from the beginning of the world. In them was this joy set before Christ. Whence he makes it the ground of his undertaking, that in the volume, or head of the Book of God, it was written of him, that he should do his will, Heb. 10. Yea, these things were the principal subject and substance of all divine revelations, 1 Pet. 1:11, 12. And the respect of Christ unto these promises and prophecies, with his doing things so as that they might be all fulfilled, is frequently mentioned in the evangelists. So was the joy set before him, or proposed unto him. And his faith of its accomplishment, against oppositions, and under all his sufferings, is illustriously expressed, Isa. 50:6–9.

Obs. IV. Herein is the Lord Christ our great example, in that he was influenced and acted, in all that he did and suffered, by a continual respect unto the glory of God and the salvation of the church. And,—

Obs. V. If we duly propose these things unto ourselves, in all our sufferings, as they are set before us in the Scripture, we shall not faint under them, nor be weary of them.

Ὑπέμεινε σταυρόν. 4. The things themselves wherein the Lord Jesus is proposed as our example are expressed: "He endured the cross, and despised the shame." Pain and shame are the two constituent parts of all outward sufferings. And they were both eminent in the death of the cross. No death more lingering, painful, and cruel; none so shameful in common reputation, nor in the thing itself, wherein he that suffered was in his dying hours exposed publicly unto the scorn and contempt with insultation of the worst of men. It were easy to manifest how extreme they were both in the death of Christ, on all considerations, of his person, his nature, his relations, disciples, doctrine, and reputation in them all. And the Scripture doth insist more on the latter than on the former. The reproaches, taunts, cruel mockings, and contempt, that were cast upon him, are frequently mentioned, Ps. 22 and 69. But we must not here enlarge on these things. It is sufficient that under these heads a confluence of all outward evils is contained,—the substance of all that can befall any of us on the account of the profession of the gospel. Neither Paganism nor Popery can go farther than painful death, shameful hanging, and the like effects of bloody cruelty.

With respect unto the first of these, it is said "he endured it." He "patiently endured it," as the word signifies. The invincible patience of our Lord Jesus Christ, enduring the cross, was manifested, not only in the holy composure of

his soul in all his sufferings to the last breath, expressed by the prophet, Isa. 53:7; but in this also, that during his torments, being so unjustly, so ungratefully, so villanously dealt withal by the Jews, he neither reviled, reproached, nor threatened them with that vengeance and destruction which it was in his power to bring upon them every moment; but he pitied them, and prayed for them to the last, that if it were possible their sin might be forgiven, Luke 23:34; 1 Pet. 2:21–23. Never was any such example of patient enduring given in the world, before nor since; nor can any equal to it be given in human nature.

Obs. VI. This manner of Christ's enduring the cross ought to be continually before us, that we may glorify God in conformity thereunto, according to the measure of our attainments, when we are called unto sufferings.—If we can see the beauty and glory of it, we are safe.

Αἰσχύνης καταφρονήσας. As unto the second, or shame, "he despised it." Unto invincible patience he added heroic magnanimity. Αἰσχύνη is "ignominy, contempt, shame, from reproach and scorn;" such as the Lord Jesus in his death was exposed unto. An ignominy that the world, both Jews and Gentiles, long made use of, to countenance themselves in their unbelief. This he "despised;"—that is, he did not succumb under it; he did not faint because of it; he valued it not, in comparison of the blessed and glorious effect of his sufferings, which was always in his eye.

Obs. VII. This blessed frame of mind in our Lord Jesus in all his sufferings, is that which the apostle proposeth for our encouragement, and unto our imitation. And it is that which contains the exercise of all grace, in faith, love, submission to the will of God, zeal for his glory, and compassion for the souls of men, in their highest degree. And,—

Obs. VIII. If he went so through his suffering, and was victorious in the issue, we also may do so in ours, through his assistance, who is "the author and finisher of our faith." And,—

Obs. IX. We have the highest instance that faith can conquer both pain and shame. Wherefore,—

Obs. X. We should neither think strange of them nor fear them, on the account of our profession of the gospel, seeing the Lord Jesus hath gone before, in the conflict with them and conquest of them;—especially considering what is added in the last place, as unto the fruit and event of his sufferings, namely,

that he is "set down at the right hand of the throne of God;" in equal authority, glory, and power with God, in the rule and government of all. For the meaning of the words, see the exposition on chap. 1:3, 8:1.

In the whole, we have an exact delineation of our Christian course in a time of persecution: 1. In the blessed example of it, which is the sufferings of Christ. 2. In the assured consequent of it, which is eternal glory: "If we suffer with him, we shall also reign with him." 3. In a direction for the right successful discharge of our duty: which is the exercise of faith on Christ himself for assistance, (1.) As a sufferer and a Saviour; (2.) As the author and finisher of our faith. 4. An intimation of the great encouragement, which we ought to fix upon under all our sufferings; namely, the joy and glory that are set before us, as the issue of them.

Hebrews 12: 3

And the apostle carries on the same argument, with respect unto an especial improvement, of it in this verse.

Ver. 3.—Ἀναλογίσασθε γὰρ τὸν τοιαύτην ὑπομεμενηκότα ὑπὸ τῶν ἁμαρτωλῶν εἰς αὐτὸν ἀντιλογίαν, ἵνα μὴ κάμητε, ταῖς ψυχαῖς ὑμῶν ἐκλυόμενοι

Ἀναλογίσασθε. Syr., ܚܙܘ, "see," "behold." Vulg., "recogitate." Rhem., "think diligently on;" not unfitly. Beza, "reputate quis ille sit," "counting," "reckoning," "judging who he is;" referring it to the person of Christ.

Γάρ. Vulg., "enim." Syr., ܗܟܝܠ, "therefore;" for in some copies of the Greek it is οὖν: but when γάρ is a note of inference from what was said, and not redditive of the reason of what was said, it is better rendered in Latin by "nam" than "enim," and includes the force of οὖν, "therefore."

Τοιαύτην ἀντιλογίαν. Syr., ܟܡܐ, "quantum" or "quanta," "how great things;" referring unto the sufferings of Christ. And indeed ἀντιλογία signifies not only a "contradiction in words," but an "opposition in things" also, or else the translator quite left out this word, rendering τοιαύτην by ܟܡܐ. Vulg., "talem contradictionem," "such contradiction."

Ὑπὸ τῶν ἁμαρτωλῶν. Syr., ܡܢ ܚܛܝܐ ܗܢܘܢ, "from those wicked ones;" referring it to them by whom he was crucified.

Εἰς αὐτὸν, "adversus semet ipsum," "against himself." The Syriac here departs from the original, ܕܗܢܘܢ ܗܘܘ ܣܩܘܒܠܐ ܠܢܦܫܗܘܢ, "who were enemies" or "adversaries unto their own souls;" intimating the ruin that the persecutors of him brought on themselves.

Ἵνα μὴ κάμητε. Syr., דְּלָא תִּאמַן לְכוּן, "that ye be not weary," that it be not irksome unto you. Vulg. Lat., "ut ne fatigemini." Rhem., "that ye be not wearied," in a passive sense: "fatiscatis," "faint not."

Ἐκλυόμενοι, "deficientes," "fracti," "remissi;" "faint," "be broken in your minds." We read the words, "lest ye be wearied, and faint in your minds;" but "and" is not in the original, and the introduction of it leads from the sense of the words: for that which is exhorted against is expressed in κάμητε, to be "wearied," or "faint;" and the other words express the cause of it, which is the sinking of our spirits, or the breaking of our resolution, or fainting in our minds.

Ver. 3.—For consider him [call things to account concerning him] that endured such [so great] contradiction of sinners against himself, that ye be not wearied through fainting in your minds.

Γάρ. The introduction of the close of this exhortation from the looking unto Jesus, is by γάρ. This renders not a reason of what was spoken before, but directs unto an especial motive unto the duty exhorted unto. Some copies read οὖν, "therefore," in a progressive exhortation.

The peculiar manner of the respect of faith unto Christ is expressed by ἀναλογίσασθε, which we render "consider." So we are directed to consider him, Heb. 3:1. But there in the original it is κατανοήσασθε,—a word of another form, used again chap. 10:24. So we also render θεωρεῖτε, chap. 7:4. This word is nowhere else used in the New Testament. Ἀναλογία, from whence it is taken, is so once only, Rom. 12:6; where we render it "proportion," "the proportion of faith:" and so is the word used in mathematical sciences, whereunto it doth belong; the due proportion of one thing unto another; so that the verb is to compare things by their due proportion one to another. Whether it respects the person of Christ, or his sufferings, we shall see immediately.

The object of this consideration is, "him that endured." Of this enduring we spake in the verse foregoing. But whereas mention is made of him who endured, and of what he endured, we must inquire where the emphasis lies that determines the object of the computation by proportion whereunto we are directed, though neither of them be excluded.

In the first way, the force of the apostle's exhortation is taken from the person of Christ; in the latter, from his sufferings. As, 1. ' "Consider him;" "qualis sit;" make a just estimate between him and us. If he suffered, if he endured such things, why should not we do so also? For he is the Son of God,

"the author and finisher of our faith." He had all glory and power in his own hand.' And, 2. As to the event of his sufferings, he is set down at the right hand of God. 'Compute thus with yourselves, that if he, being so great, so excellent, so infinitely exalted above us, yet "endured such contradiction of sinners," ought we not so to do, if we are called thereunto?'

In the latter way, supposing the proposal of his person unto us in the foregoing verse, he calls us unto the consideration of what he suffered in particular, as unto the "contradiction of sinners;" "such," so great "contradiction." And the word is applied unto all manner of oppositions, and not to contradiction only, and so may include all the sufferings of Christ. These he calls us to consider, by comparing our own with them. And this sense the following words incline unto, ' "For ye have not yet resisted unto blood," as he did.'

But although these things are thus distinguished, yet are they not to be divided. Both the person of Christ, and what he suffered, are proposed unto our diligent consideration and computation of them, with respect unto us and our sufferings.

There is in this verse, 1. A caution against, or a dehortation from, an evil that is contrary to the duty exhorted unto, and destructive of it; "that ye be not wearied." 2. The way whereby we may fall into this evil; and that is by "fainting in our minds." 3. The means to prevent it, and to keep us up unto our duty; which is the diligent consideration of the Lord Christ, whom we are to look unto: and that, (1.) As unto the excellency of his person; and, (2.) As unto his sufferings in one peculiar way, of "enduring the contradiction of sinners." (3.) As unto the greatness of that contradiction,—"such contradiction," or so great. 4. The force of this consideration unto that end is to be explained.

Ἵνα μὴ κάμητε. 1. That which we are cautioned about is, "that we be not wearied." Κάμνω is "to labour so as to bring on weariness;" and "to be sick," which is accompanied with weariness, James 5:15, Σώσει τόν κάμνοντα,—"Shall save the sick;" and "to be spent with labour, so as to give over:" so here, and Rev. 2:3; in which places alone the word is used. Κεκμηκότες, in war and games for victory, are opposed to ἀκμῆτες, "those that are courageous and successful;" signifying "such as despond, faint, and give over." Lucian in Hermot. cap. xl.: Καί ἐστι τοῦτο οὐ μικρὰ εὐτυχία τοῦ ἀθλητοῦ, τὸ μέλλειν ἀκμῆτα τοῖς κεκμηκόσι συμπεσεῖσθαι,—"It is no small good fortune of a champion, when he that is bold and courageous, falls in contention with faint-hearted persons." And the

apostle treating before of a race, and our conflict therein, may easily be supposed to have respect unto such as fainted through weariness in those contests. But the sense of the word is fully explained in that other place, where it is used in the same case, Rev. 2:3, "Thou hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake, hast laboured, and hast not fainted." To abide and persevere in suffering and labour for the name of Christ, is, not to faint or be wearied. Wherefore, to be "wearied" in this case, is to be so pressed and discouraged with the greatness or length of difficulties and trials as to draw back, to give over partially or totally from the profession of the gospel. For there is such a weariness, as whereon men do not absolutely give over the work or labour wherein they are engaged, but it grows very uneasy and tedious unto them, that they are even ready so to give over. And this I judge to be the frame of mind here cautioned against by the apostle, namely, the want of life, vigour, and cheerfulness in profession, tending unto a relinquishment of it. And it is hence evident,—

Obs. I. That such things may befall us, in the way of our profession of the gospel, as are in themselves apt to weary and burden us, so as to solicit our minds unto a relinquishment of it.—Such, in particular, are the mentioned reproaches and contradictions of men, making way unto further sufferings.

Obs. II. When we begin to be heartless, desponding, and weary of our sufferings, it is a dangerous disposition of mind, towards a defection from the gospel. So it hath been with many, who at first vigorously engaged in profession, but have been wrought over unto a conformity with the world, by weariness of their trials. And,—

Obs. III. We ought to watch against nothing more diligently than the insensible, gradual prevailing of such a frame in us, if we intend to be faithful unto the end.

Ταῖς ψυχαῖς ὑμῶν ἐκλυόμενοι. 2. There is the way whereby we fall into this dangerous condition, in the last words of the verse; it is by "fainting in our minds." For so I take the mind of the apostle to be. Τῇ ψυχῇ ἐκλύεσθαι, is "animo defici et concidere;" "to have the strength and vigour of the mind dissolved, so as to faint and fall;" to be like a dying man, to whom "solvuntur frigore membra," by a dissolution of all bodily strength. And wherein this doth consist we must inquire.

There is a spiritual vigour and strength required unto perseverance in profession in the time of persecution. Hence our duty herein is prescribed unto us under all the names and terms of preparation for a severe fight or battle. We

are commanded to "arm ourselves with the same mind that was in Christ," 1 Pet. 4:1; to "take to ourselves the whole armour of God, that we may be able to resist and stand," Eph. 6:13; to "watch, to stand fast in the faith, to quit ourselves like men, to be strong," 1 Cor. 16:13. And it is the constant, vigorous acting of faith that is required in all these things. Wherefore this "fainting in our minds," consists in a remission of the due acting of faith by all graces, and in all duties. It is faith that stirs up and engageth spiritual courage, resolution, patience, perseverance, prayer, all preserving graces and duties. If it fail herein, and our minds are left to conflict with our difficulties in their own natural strength, we shall quickly grow weary of a persecuted profession. Here lies the beginning of all spiritual declensions, namely, in the want of a due exercise of faith in all these graces and duties. Hereon our spiritual strength is dissolved, and we wax weary. And,—

Obs. IV. If we design perseverance in a time of trouble and persecution, it is both our wisdom and our duty to keep up faith unto a vigorous exercise; the want whereof is the fainting in our minds.—This is like the hands of Moses in the battle against Amalek.

3. The third thing in the words is that which is laid down in the beginning of the verse; which is, the way and means of our preservation from this evil frame, and danger thereon. And this is, the diligent consideration of the person of Christ and his sufferings, or of his person in his sufferings.

The meaning of the words hath been before spoken unto. The duty itself enjoined is built on the direction in the foregoing verse, to look unto him. So look unto him, as to consider diligently both who he is, and what he suffered; and so consider it as to make application of what we find in him and it unto our own case. Are we called to suffer? let us weigh seriously who went before us herein.

The excellency of his person, with respect unto his sufferings, is in the first place to be called unto an account, and adjusted as unto our sufferings. This our apostle fully proposeth unto us, Phil. 2:5–11.

And as unto his sufferings, he proposeth the consideration of them in one especial instance, and therein every word is emphatical: (1.) It was contradiction he underwent. (2.) It was such, or so great, as is not easy to be apprehended. (3.) It was the contradiction of sinners. (4.) It was against himself immediately.

Ἀντιλογίαν. (1.) He endured "contradiction." The word, as was observed, is used for any kind of opposition, in things as well as words, and so may include the whole suffering of Christ from men, both in the cross and in the shame thereof; but no doubt the apostle hath peculiar respect unto the revilings and reproaches which he underwent, the opposition made unto his doctrine and ministry, proclaiming himself to be a deceiver, and his doctrine to be a fable. And yet more especially, regard may be had to their triumphing over him when he was crucified: "Let the King of Israel come down from the cross, and we will believe. He saved others, himself he cannot save." Thus was it with him. And,—

Τοιαύτην. (2.) The apostle intimates the severity and cruelty of those contradictions; and herein he refers us unto the whole story of what passed at his death. "Such contradiction,"—so bitter, so severe, so cruel: whatever the malicious wits of men, or suggestions of Satan could invent or broach, that was venomous and evil, was cast upon him.

Ὑπὸ τῶν ἁμκρτωλῶν. (3.) It was the "contradiction of sinners;" that is, such as gave no bounds to their wrath and malice. But withal, the apostle seems to reflect on them as unto their state and condition. For it was the priests, the scribes, and Pharisees, who from first to last managed this contradiction; and these all boasted themselves to be just and righteous, yea, that they alone were so, all others in comparison with them being sinners. Herewith they pleased themselves, in the height of their contradiction to Jesus Christ. And so it hath been and is with all their successors in the persecution of the church. But they did deceive themselves; they were sinners, the worst of sinners,—and had the end of sinners.

Εἰς αὐτόν. (4.) It was an aggravation of his sufferings, that this contradiction against him was immediate, and as it were unto his face. There is an emphasis in that expression, εἰς αὐτόν, "against himself" in person: so they told him openly to his face that he had a devil, that he was a seducer, etc.

All this he "patiently endured," as the sense of the word was declared on the foregoing verse.

4. Lastly, The consideration hereof, namely, of the Lord Christ's patient enduring these contradictions against himself, is proposed as the means to preserve us from being weary and fainting in our minds.

It is so, (1.) By the way of motive; for if he, who in himself and in his own person was infinitely above all opposition of sinners, as the apostle states the case, Phil. 2:5–8, yet for our sakes would undergo and conflict with them all, it is

all the reason in the world that for his sake we should submit unto our portion in them. (2.) By the way of precedent and example, as it is urged by Peter, 1 Epist. 2:21, 22. (3.) By the way of deriving power from him; for the due consideration of him herein will work a conformity in our minds and souls unto him in his sufferings, which will assuredly preserve us from fainting. And we may observe, —

Obs. V. That the malicious contradiction of wicked priests, scribes, and Pharisees, against the truth, and those that profess it, on the account thereof, is suited to make them faint, if not opposed by the vigorous acting of faith on Christ, and a due consideration of his sufferings in the same kind.

Obs. VI. Whoever they are, who by their contradictions unto the truth, and them that do profess it, do stir up persecution against them, let them pretend what they will of righteousness, they are sinners, and that in such a degree as to be obnoxious unto eternal death.

Obs. VII. If our minds grow weak, through a remission of the vigorous acting of faith, in a time of great contradiction unto our profession, they will quickly grow weary, so as to give over, if not timely recovered.

Obs. VIII. The constant consideration of Christ in his sufferings is the best means to keep up faith unto its due exercise in all times of trial.

Hebrews 12: 4

Οὔπω μέχρις αἵματος ἀντικατέστητε πρὸς τὴν ἁμαρτίαν ἀνταγωνιζόμενοι.

Ver. 4.—Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin.

Having proposed the great example of Jesus Christ, and given directions unto the improvement of it, the apostle proceeds unto more general arguments, for the confirmation of his exhortation unto patience and perseverance in the times of suffering. That in this verse is taken from the consideration of their present state, and what yet they might be called unto, in the cause wherein they were engaged. For what can redeem them from ruin under greater trials who faint under the less?

The argument being taken from comparing their present state with what they might justly expect, the consideration of the things ensuing is necessary unto the exposition of the words: 1. What was their present state with respect unto troubles. 2. What they might yet be called unto. 3. The cause whence their

present and future sufferings did and were to proceed. 4. The way of opposing these evils, or danger from them. 5. The force of the argument that is in the words unto the end of the exhortation.

οὔπω μέχρις αἵματος ἀντικατέστητε. 1. The first of these, or their present state, is expressed negatively: "Ye have not yet resisted unto blood." He grants that they had met with many sufferings already; but they had been restrained, so as not to proceed unto blood and life. And he hath respect unto what he had affirmed of their past and present sufferings, chap. 10:32–34. See the exposition of the place. In all these they had well acquitted themselves, as he there declares. But they were not hereby acquitted and discharged from their warfare; for,—

2. He intimates what they might yet expect; and that is blood. All sorts of violent deaths, by the sword, by tortures, by fire, are included herein. This is the utmost that persecution can rise unto. Men may kill the body; but when they have done so, they can do no more. Blood gives the utmost bounds to their rage. And whereas the apostle says, "Ye have not yet resisted unto blood," two things are included: (1.) That those who are engaged in the profession of the gospel have no security, but that they may be called unto the utmost and last sufferings, by blood, on the account of it. For this is that which their adversaries in all ages do aim at, and that which they have attained to effect in multitudes innumerable. And God hath designed, in his infinite wisdom, that for his own glory, the glory of Christ, and of the gospel, and of the church itself, so it shall be. (2.) That whatever befall us on this side blood, is to be looked on as a fruit of divine tenderness and mercy. Wherefore I do not think that the apostle doth absolutely determine that sufferings amongst those Hebrews would come at length unto blood; but argues from hence, that whereas there is this also prepared in the suffering of the church, namely, death itself in a way of violence, they who were indulged, and as yet not called thereunto, ought to take care that they fainted not under those lesser sufferings whereunto they were exposed. And we may see,—

Obs. I. That the proportioning the degrees of sufferings, and the disposal of them as unto times and seasons, are in the hand of God. Some shall suffer in their goods and liberties, some in their lives, some at one time, some at another, as it seems good unto him. Let us therefore every one be contented with our present lot and portion in these things.

Obs. II. It is highly dishonourable to faint, in the cause of Christ and the gospel, under lesser sufferings, when we know there are greater to be undergone, by ourselves and others, on the same account.

Πρὸς τὴν ἁμαρτίαν ἀνταγωνιζόμενοι. 3. The third thing, is the cause of their suffering, or rather the party with whom their contest was in what they suffered; and this was "sin." The apostle abides in his allusion unto strife or contest for victory in public games. Therein every one that was called unto them had an adversary, whom he was to combat and contend withal. So have believers in their race; and their adversary is sin. It was not their persecutors directly, but sin in them, that they had to conflict withal. But whereas sin is but an accident or quality, it cannot act itself but in the subjects wherein it is. This, therefore, we may inquire, namely, in whom it is that this sin doth reside, and consequently what it is.

Sin, wherewith we may have a contest, is either in others or in ourselves. These others are either devils or men. That we have a contest, a fight in our profession, with sin in devils, the apostle declares, Eph. 6:12, Ἐστιν ἡμῖν ἡ παλη, —"Our wrestling," "our contest, is with," or "against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickednesses in high places." In this sort of persons, that is, wicked angels, sin continually puts forth, and acts itself for the ruin and destruction of the church. Especially it doth so in stirring up persecution against it. "The devil shall cast some of you into prison," Rev. 2:10. Against sin in them, and all the effects produced thereby, we are to strive and contend. So is it with men also, by whom the church is persecuted. They pretend other reasons for what they do; but it is sin acting itself in malice, hatred of the truth, blind zeal, envy, and bloody cruelty, that engageth, influenceth, and ruleth them in all they do. With all the effects and fruits of sin in them also believers do contend.

Again; they have a contest with sin in themselves. So the apostle Peter tells us, that "fleshly lusts" do "war against the soul," 1 Epist. 2:11. They violently endeavour the overthrow of our faith and obedience. How we are to strive against them, was fully declared in the exposition of the first verse.

So the apostle seems to have respect unto the whole opposition made unto our constancy in profession by sin, in whomsoever it acts unto that end, ourselves or others. And this is a safe interpretation of the word, comprehensive of a signal warning and instruction unto the duty exhorted unto. For it is a subtle, powerful, dangerous enemy which we have to conflict withal, and that

which acts itself in all ways and by all means imaginable. And this answers the comparison or allusion unto a public contest, which the apostle abideth in. Yet I will not deny, but that not only the sin whereby we are pressed, urged, and inclined, but that also whereunto we are pressed and urged, namely, the sin of defection and apostasy, may be intended. This we are to contend against. But these things are not separable. And we may observe,—

Obs. III. That signal diligence and watchfulness are required in our profession of the gospel, considering what enemy we have to conflict withal. This is sin, in all the ways whereby it acts its power and subtlety, which are unspeakable.

Obs. IV. It is an honourable warfare, to be engaged against such an enemy as sin is.—This is all the enemy that Christians have, as such. It works in devils, in other men, in themselves; yet nothing but sin, and that as sin, is their enemy. And this being the only contrariety that is to the nature and will of God himself, it is highly honourable to be engaged against it.

Obs. V. Though the world cannot, or will not, yet Christians can distinguish between resisting the authority of men, whereof they are unjustly accused; and the resistance of sin, under a pretence of that authority, by refusing a compliance with it.

Ἀντικατέστητε. Ἀνταγωνιζόμενοι. 4. The way or manner of the opposition to be made unto sin, in and for the preservation of our profession, is to be considered. And this is by "resisting" and "striving." They are both military terms, expressing fortitude of mind in resolution and execution. There is included in them a supposition of a vigorous and violent assault and opposition, such as enemies make in fight or battle. It is not a ludicrous contest that we are called unto. It is our lives and souls that are fought for; and our adversary will spare neither pains nor hazard to win them. Hereunto, therefore, belong all the instructions that are given us in the Scripture, to "arm ourselves, to take to ourselves the whole armour of God, to watch, to be strong, to quit ourselves like men." They are all included in the sense of these two words. And,—

Obs. VI. There is no room for sloth or negligence in this conflict.

Obs. VII. They do but deceive themselves, who hope to preserve their faith in times of trial, without the utmost watchful diligence against the assaults and impressions of sin. Yea,—

Obs. VIII. The vigour of our minds, in the constant exercise of spiritual strength, is required hereunto.

Obs. IX. Without this, we shall be surprised, wounded, and at last destroyed, by our enemy.

5. Lastly, The force of the argument in these words, unto the confirmation of the present exhortation, ariseth from the application of it unto the present state of these Hebrews. For whereas, in taking upon them the profession of the gospel, they had engaged to bear the cross, and all that was comprised therein, they were not yet come or called unto the utmost of it, namely, a resistance unto blood; so that to faint in their present state, under lesser trials, was exceedingly unbecoming of them. And,—

Obs. X. They that would abide faithful in their profession in times of trial, ought constantly to bear in mind and be armed against the worst of evils that they may be called unto on the account thereof.—This will preserve them from being shaken or surprised with those lesser evils which may befall them, when things come not to an extremity.

Hebrews 12: 5

Καὶ ἐκλέλησθε τῆς παρακλήσεως, ἥτις ὑμῖν ὡς υἱοῖς διαλέγεται· Υἱέ μου, μὴ ὀλιγώρει παιδείας Κυρίου, μηδὲ ἐκλύου ὑπ᾽ αὐτοῦ ἐλεγχόμενος.

Παρακλήσεως. Vulg. Lat., "consolationis," "of the comfort" or "consolation;" which is another signification of the word, but not proper to this place. Syr., לִיוּלְפָנָא אִינָא, "of that doctrine." "Exhortationis," "adhortationis;" "of the exhortation."

Ἥτις. The Syriac having rendered the word by "that doctrine," adds next, "which we have spoken unto you, as unto children;" referring it unto some instructions given by the apostle.

Παιδείας. Vulg., "disciplinam," "the discipline." Syr., מַרְדוּתָהּ, "correction," "rebuke;" "castigationem," "the chastisement." Ἐκλύου. Vulg., "ne fatigemini;" "be not weary;" "ne sis remissus;" "faint not."

Ὀλιγώρει. Vulg., "ne negligas:" so others, "neglect not:" we, "despise not," properly; for not only doth the word itself signify "to set light by," but the Hebrew אַל־תִּמְאַס, Prov. 3:11, is "to repudiate, to reject and contemn." And מוּסָר is properly "correction."

Ver. 5.—And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint [or wax weary] when thou art rebuked of him.

The apostle in these words proceeds unto a new argument, whereby to press his exhortation unto patience and perseverance under sufferings. And this is taken from the nature and end, on the part of God, of all those sufferings which he sends or calls us unto. For they are not only necessary, as testimonies unto the truth, but as unto us they are chastisements and afflictions, which we stand in need of, and wherein God hath a blessed design towards us. And this argument he enforceth, with sundry considerations, unto the end of verse 13.

Obs. I. This is a blessed effect of divine wisdom, that the sufferings which we undergo from men, for the profession of the gospel, shall be also chastisements of love from God, unto our spiritual advantage. And,—

Obs. II. The gospel never requires our suffering, but if we examine ourselves, we shall find that we stand in need of the divine chastisement in it. And,—

Obs. III. When, by the wisdom of God, we can discern that what we suffer on the one hand is for the glory of God and the gospel, and on the other is necessary unto our own sanctification, we shall be prevailed with unto patience and perseverance. And,—

Obs. IV. Where there is sincerity in faith and obedience, let not men despond, if they find themselves called to suffer for the gospel, when they seem to be unfit and unprepared for it; seeing it is the design of God, by those sufferings whereunto they are called, on a public account, to purify and cleanse them from their present evil frames.

This multitudes have found by experience, that their outward pressing sufferings, between them and the world, have been personal, purifying chastisements between God and their souls. By them have they been awakened, revived, mortified unto the world, and, as the apostle expresseth it, made partakers of the holiness of God, unto their inexpressible advantage and consolation. And,—

Hereby doth God defeat the counsels and expectations of the world, having a design to accomplish by their agency which they know nothing of. For those very reproaches, imprisonments, and stripes, with the loss of goods, and danger of their lives, which the world applies unto their ruin, God at the same time makes use of for their refining, purifying, consolation, and joy.

In all these things are the divine wisdom and goodness of God, in contriving and effecting all these things unto the glory of his grace and the salvation of the church, for ever to be admired.

In the words we may consider, 1. The connection of them unto those foregoing. 2. The introduction of a new argument, by a reference unto a divine testimony; and the nature of the argument, which consists in an exhortation unto duty. 3. Their former want of a due consideration of it. 4. The manner of the exhortation; it "speaketh as unto sons:" and, 5. The matter of it, expressed in two branches, containing the substance of the duty exhorted unto.

Γάρ. 1. The connection is in the conjunctive particle, "for." It denotes a reason given of what went before. Wherefore there is in the foregoing words a tacit rebuke, namely, in that they were ready to faint under the lesser trials wherewith they were exercised. And the apostle gives here an account how and whence it was so with them; and makes that the means of the introduction of the new argument which he designed; as is his manner of proceeding in this whole epistle. 'The reason,' saith he, 'why it is so with you, that you are so ready to faint, is, because you have not attended unto the direction and encouragement which are provided for you.' And this, indeed, is the rise of all our miscarriages, namely, that we attend not unto the provision that is made in the Scripture for our preservation from them.

2. The introduction of his argument is by reference unto a divine testimony of Scripture, wherein it is contained, and that appositely unto his purpose; for it is proposed in the way of an exhortation. And as this was of great force in itself, so the Hebrews might see therein that their case was not peculiar; that it was no otherwise with them than with others of the children of God in former ages; and that God had long before laid in provision for their encouragement: which things give great weight unto the argument in hand. And it hath force also from the nature of it, which is hortatory in the name of God. For divine exhortations unto duty,—wherein He entreats who can and doth command,—are full of evidences of love, condescension, and concernment in our good. And it is the height of pride and ingratitude not to comply with God's entreaties.

Ἐκλέλησθε. 3. The apostle reflects on their former want of a due consideration of this exhortation, "Ye have forgotten." What we mind not when we ought, and as we ought, we may justly be said to have forgotten. So was it with these Hebrews in some measure; whether by "the exhortation" we understand the divine words themselves, as recorded in the Scripture, or the things exhorted unto, the subject-matter of them. Under their troubles and persecutions they ought in an especial manner to have called to mind this divine exhortation, for their encouragement, and preservation from fainting. This, it seems, they had not done. And,—

Obs. V. The want of a diligent consideration of the provision that God hath made in the Scripture for our encouragement unto duty and comfort under difficulties, is a sinful forgetfulness, and of dangerous consequence unto our souls.—We shall be left to fainting. For "whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope," Rom. 15:4.

Again; in their trials, and to prevent their fainting, the apostle sends these Hebrews unto the Scriptures: which, as it proves that they ought to be conversant in them, demonstrates the springs of all spiritual strength, direction, and consolation, to be contained in them. And if this be the mind of Christ, then he that would deprive the people of the constant, daily use of the Scriptures, is Antichrist.

Ἥτις ὑμῖν ὡς υἱοῖς διαλέγεται. 4. In the manner of the exhortation, "Which speaketh unto you as unto children," there are sundry things very remarkable.

(1.) It is said to speak. The Scripture is not a dumb and silent letter, as some have blasphemed. It hath a voice in it,—the voice of God himself. And speaking is frequently ascribed unto it, John 7:42, 19:37; Rom. 4:3, 9:17, 10:11; Gal. 4:30; James 4:5. And if we hear not the voice of God in it continually, it is because of our unbelief, Heb. 3:7, 15.

(2.) The word which was spoken so long before by Solomon unto the church in his generation, is said to be spoken unto these Hebrews. For the Holy Ghost is always present in the word of the Scripture, and speaks in it equally and alike unto the church in all ages. He doth in it speak as immediately unto us as if we were the first and only persons unto whom he spake. And this should teach us with what reverence we ought to attend unto the Scripture, namely, as unto the way and means whereby God himself speaks directly unto us.

(3.) The word here used is peculiar, and in this only place applied unto the speaking of the Scripture. Διαλέλεται,—it "argues," it "pleads," it maintains a holy conference with us. It presseth the mind and will of God upon us. And we shall find the force of its arguing, if we keep it not off by our unbelief.

(4.) There is the infinite condescension of God in it, that "he speaketh unto us as sons:" which is proved by the application of the text, "My son." The words are originally the words of Solomon; not as a natural father, speaking to his own son after the flesh; but as a prophet and teacher of the church, in the name of God, or of the Holy Ghost, which speaks in him and by him. It is a representation of the authority and love of God as a father. For whereas these

words have a respect unto a time of trouble, affliction, and chastisement, it is of unspeakable concernment unto us to consider God under the relation of a father, and that in them he speaks unto us as sons. The words spoken by Solomon, were spoken by God himself.

Although the words, "My son," are used only to denote the persons to whom the exhortation is given, yet the apostle looks in the first place unto the grace contained in them. 'He speaketh unto us as unto sons.' This he puts a remark upon, because our gratuitous adoption is the foundation of God's gracious dealings with us. And this, if any thing, is meet to bind our minds unto a diligent compliance with this divine exhortation, namely, the infinite condescension and love of God, in owning of us as sons, in all our trials and afflictions. And,—

Obs. VI. Usually God gives the most evident pledges of their adoption unto believers when they are in their sufferings, and under their afflictions.—Then do they most stand in need of them; then do they most set off the love and care of God towards us.

"My son," is an appellation that a wise and tender father would make use of, to reduce his child to consideration and composure of mind, when he sees him nigh unto disorder or despondency, under pain, sickness, trouble, or the like: ' "My son," let it not be thus with thee.' God sees us, under our afflictions and sufferings, ready to fall into discomposures, with excesses of one kind or another; and thereon applies himself unto us with this endearing expression, "My children."

'But if God have this kindness for believers, and no affliction or suffering can befall them but by his ordering and disposition, why doth he not prevent them, and preserve them in a better state and condition?' I answer, that the wisdom, the love, the necessity of this divine dispensation, is that which the apostle declares in the following verses, as we shall see.

5. The exhortation itself consisteth of two parts: (1.) "Not to despise the chastening of the Lord." (2.) "Not to faint when we are rebuked of him."

Although it be God himself principally that speaks the words in the first person, yet here he is spoken of in the third;—"of the Lord," and "of him;" for "my," and "by me:" which is usual in Scripture, and justifieth our speaking unto God in prayer sometimes in the second, sometimes in the third person.

All our miscarriages under our sufferings and afflictions may be reduced unto these two heads. And we are apt to fall into one of these extremes, namely, either to despise chastisements, or to faint under them.

(1.) Against the first we are cautioned in the first place; and the word of caution being in the singular number, we have well rendered it, "Despise not thou," that every individual person may conceive himself spoken unto in particular, and hear God speaking these words unto him. And we may consider, [1.] What is this "chastening of the Lord." [2.] What it is to "despise it."

Παιδείας. [1.] The word is variously rendered, "doctrine," "institution," "correction," "chastisement," "discipline." And it is such correction as is used in the liberal, ingenuous education of children by their parents, as is afterwards declared. We render it "nurture," Eph. 6:4; where it is joined with νουθεσία, that is, "instruction." And 2 Tim. 3:16, it is distinguished both from "reproof" and "correction;" whence we render it "instruction." And παιδεύω, the verb, is used in both these senses; sometimes "to teach," or "to be taught, learned, instructed," Acts 7:22, 22:3; 1 Tim. 1:20; 2 Tim. 2:25: sometimes "to correct" or "chastise," Luke 23:16, 22; 1 Cor. 11:32; Rev. 3:19. Wherefore it is a "correction for instruction." So it is expressed by the psalmist: "Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest, O LORD, and teachest him out of thy law," Ps. 94:12. So doth God deal with his children; so is it necessary that he should do. It is needful that divine institution or instruction should be accompanied with correction. We stand in need of it in this world.

Κυρίου. But that which I would principally look on in the words, is the application of this exhortation unto us under sufferings, troubles, and persecutions for the gospel, which is here used by the apostle. For whereas we can see nothing in them but the wrath and rage of men, thinking them causeless, and perhaps needless; they are indeed God's chastisements of us, for our education and instruction in his family. And if we duly consider them as such, applying ourselves to learn what we are taught, we shall pass through them more to our advantage than usually we do. Let us bend our minds unto that which is the proper work that in our persons we are called unto, and we shall find the benefit of them all.

Μὴ ὀλιγώρει. [2.] That which we are cautioned against, with respect unto chastening for this end, is, that we "despise it not." The word is nowhere used in the Scripture but in this place only. It signifies "to set lightly by, to have little esteem of, not to value any thing according to its worth and use." The Hebrew

word which the apostle renders hereby is מָאַס; which is commonly rendered by ἀποδοκιμάζειν, "to reprobate, to reject, to despise;" sometimes by ἐξουθενεῖν, "pro nihilo reputare," "to have no esteem of." We render the apostle's word by "despise;" which yet doth not intend a despising that is so formally, but only interpretatively. Directly to despise and contemn, or reject, the chastisements of the Lord, is a sin that perhaps none of his sons or children do fall into. But not to esteem of them as we ought, not to improve them unto their proper end, not to comply with the will of God in them, is interpretatively to despise them. Wherefore the evil cautioned against is, 1st. Want of a due regard unto divine admonitions and instructions in all our troubles and afflictions. And that ariseth either from, (1st.) Inadvertency; we look on them, it may be, as common accidents of life, wherein God hath no especial hand or design: or, (2dly.) Stoutheartedness; it may be they are but in smaller things, as we esteem them, such as we may bear with the resolution of men, without any especial application unto the will of God in them. 2dly. The want of the exercise of the wisdom of faith, to discern what is of God in them; as, (1st.) Love unto our persons; (2dly.) His displeasure against our sins; (3dly.) The end which he aims at, which is our instruction and sanctification. 3dly. The want of a sedulous application of our souls unto his call and mind in them; (1st.) In a holy submission unto his will; (2dly.) In a due reformation of all things wherewith he is displeased; (3dly.) In the exercise of faith for supportment under them, etc. Where there is a want of these things, we are said interpretatively to "despise the chastening of the Lord;" because we defeat the end and lose the benefit of them no less than if we did despise them.

Obs. VII. It is a tender case to be under troubles and afflictions, which requires our utmost diligence, watchfulness, and care about it.—God is in it, acting as a father and a teacher. If he be not duly attended unto, our loss by them will be inexpressible.

(2.) The second caution is, that we "faint not when we are reproved;" for this is the second evil which we are liable unto, under troubles and afflictions.

Ἐλεγχόμενοι. [1.] The word, both in the Hebrew and in the Greek, signifies "a reproof by rational conviction." The same thing materially with that of "chastisement" is intended; but under this formal consideration, that there is in that chastisement a convincing reproof. God, by the discovery unto ourselves of our hearts and ways, it may be in things which we before took no notice of, convinceth us of the necessity of our troubles and afflictions. He makes us understand wherefore it is that he is displeased with us. And what is our duty

hereon is declared, Hab. 2:1–4; namely, to accept of his reproof, to humble ourselves before him, and to betake ourselves unto the righteousness of faith for relief.

[2.] That which we are subject unto, when God makes his chastisements to be reproofs also (which is not always, but when we are uncompliant with his will in a peculiar manner, for which we are reproved) is to "faint." The word hath been opened on verse 3.

And this fainting under God's reproofs consists in four things: 1st. Despondency and heartless dejection in our own minds; which David encourageth himself against, Ps. 42:5, 6, 43:5. 2dly. Heartless complaints, to the discouragement of others. See Heb. 12:12, 13. 3dly. Omission, or giving over our necessary duty; which befalls many in times of persecution, Heb. 10:25, 26. 4thly. In judging amiss of the dealings of God, either as unto the greatness or length of our trials, or as unto his design in them. Isa. 40:27–31. And we may learn,—

Obs. VIII. That when God's chastisements in our troubles and afflictions are reproofs also, when he gives us a sense in them of his displeasure against our sins, and we are reproved by him; yet even then he requires of us that we should not faint nor despond, but cheerfully apply ourselves unto his mind and calls.—This is the hardest case a believer can be exercised withal, namely, when his troubles and afflictions are also in his own conscience reproofs for sin.

Obs. IX. A sense of God's displeasure against our sins, and of his reproving us for them, is consistent with an evidence of our adoption, yea, may be an evidence of it, as the apostle proves in the next verses.

The sum of the instruction in this verse is, that,—

Obs. X. A due consideration of this sacred truth, namely, that all our troubles, persecutions, and afflictions, are divine chastisements and reproofs, whereby God evidenceth unto us our adoption, and his instructing us for our advantage, is an effectual means to preserve us in patience and perseverance unto the end of our trials.—They who have no experience of it, have no knowledge of these things.

Hebrews 12: 6

Ὃν γὰρ ἀγαπᾷ Κύριος, παιδεύει· μαστιγοῖ δὲ πάντα υἱὸν ὃν παραδέχεται.

The apostle, proceeding with the divine testimony unto his purpose recorded by Solomon, retaining the sense of the whole exactly, changeth the words in the latter clause. For instead of וּכְאָב אֶת־בֵּן יִרְצֶה, "and as a father the son in

whom he delighteth," with whom he is pleased; he supplies μαστιγοῖ δὲ πάντα υἱὸν ὃν παραδέχεται, "and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth." In the Proverbs the words are exegetical of those foregoing, by an allusion unto an earthly parent: "For whom the LORD loveth he correcteth, even as a father the son in whom he delighteth." In the apostle they are further explanatory of what was before affirmed; but the sense is the same. And the reason of the change seems to be, because the apostle would apply the name of "son," from whence he argues, unto them principally intended, namely, the children of God; and not unto them who are occasionally mentioned in the allusion, which are the children of earthly parents. Or we may say, that the apostle makes this addition, confirming what was before spoken; seeing he fully explains the similitude of the latter clause in the original, in the following verses. However, the sense in both places is absolutely the same.

The Syriac in the latter clause reads לִבְנַיָּא, in the plural number, "the sons;" and in the last words retain the Hebraism, דְּהוֹ צָבֵא בְּהוֹן, "in whom he willeth," from רָצָה, that is, "is well pleased."

There may be a double distinction in reading of the last clause. Some place the incisum, or note of distinction, at πάντα; and then the sense is, "He scourgeth every one, whom he receiveth or acknowledgeth as a son:" some at υἱόν, as we render it, "every son whom he receiveth;" which is the better reading.

Ver. 6.—For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.

There is a reason given us in these words why we should not faint under divine chastisements, as the redditive conjunction "for," signifies.

And this reason consists in a general rule, whereby what is spoken before is confirmed as highly reasonable, and way is made for what ensues. And this rule is of that nature, as is suited to answer all objections against the doctrine of afflictions, and God's dealing with us in them; which, when we come to the trial, we shall find to be many.

And this rule is, that all these things are to be referred unto the sovereignty, wisdom, and goodness of God. 'This,' saith he, 'is the way of God; thus it seems good to him to deal with his children; thus he may do because of his sovereign dominion over all. May not he do what he will with his own? This he doth in infinite wisdom, for their good and advantage; as also to evidence his love unto them and care of them.' And this is that which we are principally taught in these words, namely,—

Obs. I. That in all our afflictions, the resignation of ourselves unto the sovereign pleasure, infinite wisdom, and goodness of God, is the only means or way of preserving us from fainting, weariness, or neglect of duty.—After all our arguings, desires, and pleas, this is that which we must come unto: whereof we have an illustrious instance and example in Job. See chap, 33:12, 13, 34:18, 19, 23, 31–33, 42:4–6.

Ὃν ἀγαπᾷ Κύριος παιδεύει. First, In the first part of the testimony given unto the sovereignty and wisdom of God, in the ways and methods of his dealing with his children, we are instructed,—

Obs. II. That love is antecedent unto chastening: he chastens whom he loves. —So it is with any father. He hath first the love of a father, before he chastens his son. Whatever, therefore, is the same materially with the chastisement of children, if it be where the love of adoption doth not precede, is punishment. The love, therefore, here intended, is the love of adoption; that is, the love of benevolence, whereby he makes men his children, and his love of complacency in them when they are so.

Obs. III. Chastising is an effect of his love.—It is not only consequential unto it, but springs from it. Wherefore there is nothing properly penal in the chastisements of believers. Punishment proceeds from love unto justice, not from love unto the person punished. Chastisement is from love to the person chastised, though mixed with displeasure against his sin.

Obs. IV. Unto chastisement is required, that the person chastised be in a state wherein there is sin, or that he be a sinner; but he is not properly chastised because he is a sinner, so as that sin should have an immediate influence unto the chastisement, as the meritorious cause of it, whence the person should receive a condignity of punishment thereunto. But the consideration of a state of sin is required unto all chastisement; for the end of it is to take away sin, to subdue it, to mortify it, to give an increase in grace and holiness, as we shall see. There is no chastisement in heaven, nor in hell. Not in heaven, because there is no sin; not in hell, because there is no amendment. Chastisement is a companion of them that are in the way, and of them only.

Obs. V. Divine love and chastening are inseparable.—"Whom he loveth;" that is, whomsoever he loveth. None goes free, as the apostle declares immediately. It is true, there are different degrees and measures of

chastisements; which comparatively make some seem to have none, and some to have nothing else: but absolutely the divine παιδεία, or instructive chastisement, is extended unto all in the family of God, as we shall see.

Obs. VI. Where chastisement evidenceth itself (as it doth many ways, with respect unto God the author of it, and those that are chastised) not to be penal, it is a broad seal set to the patent of our adoption: which the apostle proves in the following verses.

Obs. VII. This being the way and manner of God's dealing with his children, there is all the reason in the world why we should acquiesce in his sovereign wisdom therein, and not faint under his chastisement.

Obs. VIII. No particular person hath any reason to complain of his portion in chastisement, seeing this is the way of God's dealing with all his children, 1 Pet. 4:12, 5:9.

Secondly, the latter clause of this divine testimony, as expressed by the apostle, "And scourgeth every son whom he receiveth," if it were, as it is generally understood, the same with the former assertion, expressed with somewhat more earnestness, would need no further exposition, the same truth being contained in the one and the other. But I confess, in my judgment, there is something peculiar in it; which I shall propose, and leave it unto that of the reader. And,—

Δέ. 1. The particle δέ is nowhere merely conjunctive, signifying no more but "and," as we and others here render it. It may rather be "etiam," "even;" or "also," "moreover."

Μαστιγοῖ. 2. The verb, "scourgeth," argues at least a peculiar degree and measure in chastisement, above what is ordinary; and it is never used but to express a high degree of suffering. A scourging is the utmost which is used in παιδεία, or "corrective instruction." Wherefore the utmost of what God inflicts on any in this world is included in this expression.

Παραδέχεται. 3. By παραδέχεται, "receiveth, accepteth, owneth, avoweth," the apostle expresseth יִרְצֶה in the original; the word whereby God declares his rest, acquiescency, and well-pleasing in Christ himself, Isa. 42:1. So that an especial approbation is included herein.

Πάντα υἱόν. 4. "Every son," is not to be taken universally, for so every son is not scourged; but it is restrained unto such sons as God doth so accept.

On these considerations, I am induced to judge this to be the meaning of the words, namely, 'Yea, even (also) he severely chastiseth, above the ordinary degree and measure, those sons whom he accepts, and delights in in a peculiar manner.' For, 1. This gives a distinct sense to this sentence, and doth not make it a mere repetition in other words of what went before. 2. The introductive particle and meaning of the words themselves require that there be an advancement in them, above what was before spoken. 3. The dealings of God in all ages, as unto sundry instances, with his children, have been answerable hereunto. 4. The truth contained herein is highly necessary unto the supportment and consolation of many of God's children. For when they are signalized by affliction, when all must take notice that they are scourged in a peculiar manner, and suffer beyond the ordinary measure of the children of God, they are ready to despond, as Job was, and David, and Heman, and be utterly discouraged. But a due apprehension hereof, (which is a truth, whether intended here or no, as I judge it is,) namely, that it is the way of God to give them the severest trials and exercises, to scourge them, when others shall be more lightly chastened, whom he loves, accepts of, and delights in, in a peculiar manner, will make them lift up their heads, and rejoice in all their tribulations. See Rom. 5:3–5, 8:35–39; 1 Cor. 4:9–13, 2 Cor. 6:4–10, 11:23–28.

The reasons and ends of God's dealing thus with those whom he owneth and receiveth in a peculiar manner, with that provision of heavenly consolation for the church, with holy weapons against the power of temptations in such cases as that complained of by Heman, Ps. 88, which are treasured up in this sacred truth, are well worthy our enlargement on them, if it were suitable unto our present design.

Hebrews 12: 7

Εἰ παιδείαν ὑπομένετε, ὡς υἱοῖς ὑμῖν προσφέρεται ὁ Θεὸς· τίς γάρ ἐστιν υἱὸς ὃν οὐ παιδεύει πατήρ;

Παιδείαν ὑπομένετε. Vulg. Lat., "in disciplina perseverate;" Rhem., "persevere ye in discipline:" neither to the words nor to the sense of the place.

Ὑμὶν προσφέρεται ὁ Θεός. "Vobis offert se Deus," Vulg.; "God doth offer himself unto you." "Exhibebit," or "exhibet." Syr., דַּאֵיךְ דַּלְוָת בְּנַיָּא סָעֵר צַיאדִיכוֹן, "dealeth with you as with children."

Πατήρ, אֲבוּהִי, "his father."

Tremellius renders the Syriac, "Endure therefore chastisement, because God dealeth with you as with children;" which somewhat alters the sense of the original but gives that which is good and wholesome.

Ver. 7.—If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?

It is not a new argument that is here produced, but an inference from and an especial application of that foregoing, and the exhortation confirmed by it. There are three things in the words: 1. A supposition of the performance of the duty exhorted unto: "If ye endure," etc. 2. The benefit or advantage obtained thereby: "God dealeth," etc. 3. An illustration of the whole, by a comparison with men in their dealings: "For what son," etc.

Εἰ. As to the first, the Vulgar reads, as we observed, "Persevere ye in discipline;" probably for εἰ reading εἰς, and taking ὑπομένετε in the imperative mood. But as ὑπομένειν εἰς παιδείαν is no proper Greek expression, so the sense is obscured by it. There is therefore a supposition in the words, 'If you do comply with the exhortation.'

Ὑπομένετε. Both the words have been opened before. Schlichtingius, Grotius, etc., would have ὑπομένετε to signify only "to undergo," "to endure the sorrow and pain of afflictions, without respect unto their patience or perseverance in enduring of them." And so, saith Grotius, is the word used James 1:12; which is quite otherwise, as every one will discern that doth but look on the text. Nor is it ever used in the New Testament but to express a grace in duty, a patient endurance. So is it twice used in this chapter before, verses 1, 2. And there is no reason here to assign another sense unto it. Besides, a mere suffering of things calamitous, which is common unto mankind, is no evidence of any gracious acceptance with God. "If ye endure;" that is, with faith, submission, patience, and perseverance, so as not to faint.

The chastisement intended, we have before declared.

Παιδείαν. This, therefore, is that which the apostle designs: 'If,' saith he, 'afflictions, trials, and troubles, do befall you, such as God sends for the chastisement of his children, and their breeding up in his nurture and fear; and you undergo them with patience and perseverance, if you faint not under them, and desert your duty, etc.' And,—

This patient endurance of chastisements is of great price in the sight of God, as well as of singular use and advantage unto the souls of them that believe. For,—

Προσφέρεται. Secondly, Hereon "God dealeth with you as with sons." The word προσφέρεται is peculiar in this sense. 'He offereth himself unto you in the σχέσις, the "habit" of a father to his children.' 'He proposeth himself unto you [as a father,] and acteth accordingly; not as an enemy, not as a judge, not as towards strangers; but as towards children.' I think, "He dealeth with you," doth scarce reach the importance of the word.

Ὡς υἱοῖς. Now, the meaning is not, 'That hereupon, on the performance of this duty, when you have so done, God will act towards you as sons;' for this he doth in all their chastisements themselves, as the apostle proves: but, 'Hereby it will evidently appear, even unto yourselves, that so God deals with you; you shall be able, in all of them, to see in him the discipline and acting of a father towards his sons. As such, he will present himself unto you.' Wherefore,—

Obs. I. Afflictions or chastisements are no pledges of our adoption, but when and where they are endured with patience.—If it be otherwise with us, they are nothing but tokens of anger and displeasure. So that,—

Obs. II. It is the internal frame of heart and mind under chastisements that lets in and receives a sense of God's design and intention towards us in them.—Otherwise "no man knoweth love or hatred, by all that is before him;" no conclusion can be made one way or other from hence, that we are afflicted. All are so, the best and worst, or may be so. But it is unto us herein according unto our faith and patience. If the soul do carry itself regularly and obedientially under its trials, every grace will so act itself as to beget in it a secret evidence of the love of God, and a view of him, as of a father. If our hearts tumultuate, repine, faint, and are weary, no sense of paternal love can enter into them, until they are rebuked and brought into a composure.

Obs. III. This way of dealing becomes the relation between God and believers, as father and children; namely, that he should chastise, and they should bear it patiently.—This makes it evident that there is such a relation between them. And this the apostle illustrates from the way and manner of men in that relation one to another.

Thirdly, "For what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?" 'Think not strange hereof; it is that which necessarily follows their relation, "for what son." ' The apostle doth not take his allusion from matter of fact, but from right and duty: for there are many, too many sons, that are never chastised by their fathers; which commonly ends in their ruin. But he supposeth two things: 1. That every son will more or less stand in need of chastisement. 2. That every

wise, careful, and tender father will in such cases chasten his son. Wherefore the illustration of the argument is taken from the duty inseparably belonging unto the relation of father and son; for thence it is evident that God's chastening of believers is his dealing with them as sons.

Hebrews 12: 8

Εἰ δὲ χωρίς ἐστε παιδείας, ἧς μέτοχοι γεγόνασι πάντες, ἄρα νόθοι ἐστὲ, και οὐχ υἱοί.

Νόθοι. Syr., גוּבְיֵיא, "aliens," "foreigners," "strangers." Vulg. Lat., "adulteri;" which the Rhem. render "bastards," because of the palpable mistake in the Latin. Bez., "supposititii;" which, as Renius on Valla observes, is ὑποβολιμαῖοι, properly "spurii," "bastards," children illegitimate, who have no right to the inheritance.

Ver. 8.—But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons.

The rule which the apostle hath laid down concerning chastisements, as a necessary, inseparable adjunct of the relation between father and son, is so certain in nature and grace, that to the inference which he hath made on the one hand unto the evidence of sonship from them, he adds here another no less unto his purpose on the other; namely, that those who have no chastisements are no sons, no children.

There is in the words, 1. A supposition of a state without chastisement; 2. An application of the rule unto that state, "All sons are chastised;" 3. An inference from both, that such persons are "bastards, and not sons:" whereunto we must add the force of this reasoning unto his present purpose.

Εἰ δἑ. 1. The introduction of the supposition by εἰ δέ, "but if," declares that what he speaks is of another, contrary nature unto that before proposed: 'But if it be otherwise with you, namely, that ye are without chastisement.'

Χωρίς ἐστε παιδείας. Take "chastisement" materially for every thing that is grievous or afflictive, and no man is absolutely without it. For all men must die, and undergo the weaknesses or troubles that lead thereunto; and commonly this is most grievous unto them who have had least trouble in their lives. But comparatively, some even in this sense are freed from chastisement. Such the psalmist speaks of, "There are no bands in their death, but their strength is firm. They are not in trouble as other men, neither are they plagued like other men," Ps. 73:4, 5: which he gives as a character of the worst sort of men in the world.

But this is not the chastisement here intended. We have showed before that it is an eruditing, instructive correction; and so doth the design of the place require that it should here signify. And this some professors of Christian religion may be without absolutely. Whatever trouble they may meet withal, yet are they not under divine chastisements for their good. Such are here intended. Yet the apostle's design may reach farther; namely, to awaken them who were under troubles, but were not sensible of their being divine chastisements, and so lost all the benefit of them. For even such persons can have no evidence of their sonship, but have just ground to make a contrary judgment concerning themselves.

Ἧς μέτοχοι γεγόνασι πάντες. 2. To confirm his inference, the apostle adds the substance of his rule: "Whereof all are partakers." The Syriac reads it, "Wherewith every man is chastised;" but it must be restrained to "sons," whether the sons of God or of men, as in the close of the foregoing verse. This, therefore, the apostle is positive in, that it is altogether in vain to look for spiritual sonship without chastisement. They are all partakers of it, every one of his own share and portion. There is a general measure of afflictions assigned unto the church, Head and members, whereof every one is to receive his part, Col. 1:24.

Ἄρα νόθοι ἐστὲ καὶ οὐχ υἱοί. 3. The inference on this supposition is, that such persons are "bastards, and not sons." Their state is expressed both positively and negatively, to give the greater emphasis unto the assertion. Besides, if he had said only, 'Ye are bastards,' it would not have been so evident that they were not sons, for bastards are sons also; but they are not such sons as have any right unto the paternal inheritance. Gifts they may have, and riches bestowed on them by their fathers; but they have no right of inheritance by virtue of their sonship. Such doth the apostle here declare them to be who are without chastisement. And we may hence observe,—

Obs. I. That there are no sons of God, no real partakers of adoption, that are without some crosses or chastisements in this world.—They deceive themselves, who expect to live in God's family and not to be under his chastening discipline. And this should make every one of us very well contented with our own lot and portion, whatever it be.

Obs. II. It is an act of spiritual wisdom, in all our troubles, to find out and discern divine, paternal chastisements; without which we shall never behave ourselves well under them, nor obtain any advantage by them.—So should we do in the least, and so in the greatest of them.

Obs. III. There are in the visible church, or among professors, some that have no right unto the heavenly inheritance.—They are bastards; sons that may have gifts and outward enjoyments, but they are not heirs. And this is a great evidence of it in any, namely, that they are not chastised;—not that they are not at all troubled, for they may be in trouble like other men, (for "man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward,") but that they are not sensible of divine chastisement in them; they do not receive them, bear them, nor improve them, as such.

Obs. IV. The joyous state of freedom from affliction is such as we ought always to watch over with great jealousy, lest it should be a leaving of us out of the discipline of the family of God.—I do not say, on the other hand, that we may desire afflictions, much less cruciate ourselves, like some monastics or Circumcelliones; but we may pray that we may not want any pledge of our adoption, leaving the ordering and disposal of all things unto the sovereign will and pleasure of God.

Lastly, There is great force from this consideration added unto the apostle's exhortation, namely, that we should not faint under our trials and afflictions: for if they are all such divine chastisements as without which we can have no evidence of our relation unto God as a father, yea, as without a real participation wherein we can have no right unto the eternal inheritance, it is a thing unwise and wicked to be weary of them, or to faint under them.

Hebrews 12: 9, 10

Εἶτα τοὺς μὲν τῆς σαρκὸς ἡμῶν πατέρας εἴχομεν παιδευτὰς, καὶ ἐνετρεπόμεθα· οὐ πολλῷ μᾶλλον ὑποταγησόμεθα τῷ Πατρὶ τῶν πνευμάτων, καὶ ζήσομεν; Οἱ μὲν γὰρ πρὸς ὀλίγας ἡμέρας, κατὰ τὸ δοκοῦν αὐτοῖς, ἐπαίδευον· ὁ δὲ ἐπὶ τὸ συμφέρον, εἰς τὸ μεταλαβεῖν τῆς ἁγιότητος αὐτοῦ.

Εἶτα. Syr., ܐܝܢ, "and if;" that is, εἰ δέ: which Beza judgeth the more commodious reading; which is undoubtedly a mistake, for the apostle intimates a progress unto a new argument in this word. Vulg. Lat., "deinde;" and so Beza, properly; which we render "furthermore," or "moreover." Some, "ita;" "so," "in like manner."

Τοὺς μὲν τῆς σαρκός etc. Some refer σαρκός, to παιδευτάς, and not to πατέρας. So the sense should be, "we have had fathers, chasteners of the flesh." But the opposition between "fathers" in the first place, and the "Father of spirits" afterwards, will not admit hereof. And the Syriac determines the sense, אֲבָהִין דְּבִסְיָא דִּין הֲווּ לַן, "and if the fathers of our flesh have chastised us."

Ἐνετρεπόμεθα. Vulg. Lat., "reverebamur eos," "reveriti sumus;" "we gave them reverence." All supply "them" unto the text. Syr., "we were affected with shame for them;" as all correction is accompanied with an ingenuous shame in children.

Πρὸς ὀλίγας ἡμέρας. Vulg., "in tempore paucorum dierum." Rhem., "for a time of few days," a short time. Syr., לְזִמְנָן הוּ זְעוּר, "for a little while." "Ad paucos dies," "for a few days."

Κατὰ τὸ δοκοῦν αὐτοῖς. Vulg., "secundùm voluntatem suam," "according to their will." Syr., אֵיךְ דְּצָבְיִן הֲווּ, "according as they would." [Beza,] "prout ipsis videbatur," "as it seemed good unto them." We, "after their own pleasure;" without doubt improperly, according to the usual acceptation of that phrase of speech. For it intimates a regardlessness to right and equity, whereof there is nothing in the original. "According to their judgment," "as they saw good," or supposed themselves to have reason for what they did.

Ἐπὶ τὸ συμφέρον, "ad id quod utile est," "unto that which is profitable." Syr., for ὁ δέ, אֱלָהָא דִּין, "but God," who is intended; לְעִזְרָנָן, "unto our aid" or "help." "Ad commodum," that is, "nostrum;" "for our profit."

Εἰς τὸ μεταλαθεῖν τῆς ἁγιότητος αὐτοῦ. Vulg., "in recipiendo sanctificationem ejus;" Rhem., "in receiving of his sanctification;" missing the sense of both the words. Sanctification is ἁγιασμός, not ἁγιότης; and εἰς τό expresseth the final cause.

Ver. 9, 10.—Moreover, we have had fathers of our flesh, who chastened [us,] and we gave [them] reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? For they verily for a few days chastened [us,] as it seemed good unto them; but he for [our] profit, that [we] might partake of his holiness.

The design of these words is further to evince the equity of the duty exhorted unto, namely, the patient enduring of divine chastisement; which is done on such cogent principles of conviction as cannot be avoided.

Εἶτα. It is a new argument that is produced, and not a mere application or improvement of the former; as the word εἶτα, "furthermore," or "moreover," doth signify. The former was taken from the right of parents, this is taken from the duty of children.

And the argument in the words is taken from a mixture of principles and experience. The principles whereon it proceeds are two, and of two sorts: the first is from the light of nature, namely, that children ought to obey their parents, and submit unto them in all things; the other is from the light of grace, namely, that there is the same real relation between God and believers as is between natural parents and their children, though it be not of the same nature. The whole strength of the argument depends on these undoubted principles.

Εἴχομεν. For the confirmation of the first of these principles, common experience is produced. 'It is so, for it hath been so with us; we ourselves have had such fathers,' etc.

Πολλῷ μᾶλλον. As for the manner of the argument, it is "à comparatis," and therein "à minori ad majus." 'If it be so in the one case, how much more ought it to be so in the other.'

In each of the comparates there is a supposition consisting of many parts, and an assertion on that supposition: in the first, as to matter of fact, in the latter, as unto right; as we shall see.

Τῆς σαρκὰς ἡμῶν πατέρας. The supposition in the first of the comparates consists of many parts; as, 1. That "we have had fathers of our flesh;" those from whom we derived our flesh by natural generation. This being the ordinance of God, and the way by him appointed for the propagation of mankind, is the foundation of the relation intended, and that which gives parents the right here asserted. That learned man did but indulge to his fancy, who would have these "fathers" to be the teachers of the Jewish church; which how they should come to be opposed unto "the Father of spirits," he could not imagine.

Παιδευτάς. 2. That they were chasteners: "They chastened us." They had a right so to do, and they did so accordingly.

Κατὰ τὸ δοκοῦν αὐτοῖς. 3. The rule whereby they proceeded in their so doing is also supposed, namely, they used their judgment as unto the causes and measure of chastisement; they did it "as it seemed good unto them." It is not said that they did it for or according to their pleasure, without respect unto rule or

equity; for it is the example of good parents that is intended: but they did it according to their best discretion; wherein yet they might fail, both as unto the causes and measure of chastisement.

Πρὸς ὀλίγας ἡμέρας. 4. The exercise of this right is "for a few days." And this may have a double sense: (1.) The limitation of the time of their chastisement, namely, that it is but for a little while, for a few days; to wit, whilst we are in infancy, or under age. Ordinarily corporal chastisements are not longer continued. So "a few days," is a few of our own days. Or, (2.) It may respect the advantage which is to be obtained by such chastisement; which is only the regulation of our affections for a little season.

Ἐνετρεπόμεθα. The case on the one hand being stated on these suppositions, the duty of children, under the power of their natural parents, is declared. And the word signifies "an ingenuous, modest shame, with submission;" opposite unto stubbornness and frowardness. We add the word "them" unto the original, which is necessary; "we had them in reverence." 'We were kept in a temper of mind meet to be applied unto duty. We did not desert the family of our parents, nor grow weary of their discipline, so as to be discouraged from our duty.' And, —

Obs. I. As it is the duty of parents to chastise their children, if need be, and of children to submit thereunto; so,—

Obs. II. It is good for us to have had the experience of a reverential submission unto paternal chastisements; as from hence we may be convinced of the equity and necessity of submission unto God in all our afflictions. For so these things are improved by the apostle.—And they arise from the consideration of the differences that are between divine and parental chastisements. For,—

Τῷ Πατρὶ τῶν πνευμάτων. 1. He by whom we are chastised is "the Father of spirits." He is a father also, but of another kind and nature than they are. "The Father of spirits;" that is, of our spirits: for so the opposition requires; the fathers of our flesh, and the Father of our spirits. And whereas the apostle here distributes our nature into its two essential parts, the flesh and the spirit; it is evident that by the "spirit," the rational soul is intended. For although the flesh also be a creature of God, yet is natural generation used as a means for its production; but the soul is immediately created and infused, having no other father but God himself. See Num. 16:22; Zech. 12:1; Jer. 38:16. I will not deny but that the signification of the word here may be farther extended, namely, so as

to comprise also the state and frame of our spirits in their restoration and rule, wherein also they are subject unto God alone; but his being the immediate creator of them is regarded in the first place.

And this is the fundamental reason of our patient submission unto God in all our afflictions, namely, that our very souls are his, the immediate product of his divine power, and under his rule alone. May he not do what he will with his own? Shall the potsherd contend with its maker?

2. It is supposed from the foregoing verses, that this Father of our spirits doth also chastise us; which is the subject-matter treated of.

Ἐπὶ τὸ συμφέρον. 3. His general end and design therein, is "our profit" or advantage. This being once well fixed, takes off all disputes in this case. Men, in their chastisements, do at best but conjecture at the event, and are no way able to effect it: but what God designs shall infallibly come to pass; for he himself will accomplish it, and make the means of it certainly effectual. But it may be inquired, what this "profit," this benefit or advantage, is; for outwardly there is no appearance of any such thing. This is declared in the next place.

Εἰς τὸ μεταλαβεῖν τῆς ἁγιότητος αὐτοῦ. 4. The especial end of God in divine chastisements, is, "that he may make us partakers of his holiness." The holiness of God, is either that which he hath in himself, or that which he approves of and requires in us. The first is the infinite purity of the divine nature; which is absolutely incommunicable unto us, or any creature whatever. Howbeit, we may be said to be partakers of it in a peculiar manner, by virtue of our interest in God, as our God: as also by the effects of it produced in us, which are his image and likeness, Eph. 4:24; as we are said to be made "partakers of the divine nature," 2 Pet. 1:4. And this also is the holiness of God in the latter sense; namely, that which he requires of us and approves in us.

Whereas, therefore, this holiness consists in the mortification of our lusts and affections, in the gradual renovation of our natures, and the sanctification of our souls, the carrying on and increase of these things in us is that which God designs in all his chastisements. And whereas, next unto our participation of Christ, by the imputation of his righteousness unto us, this is the greatest privilege, glory, honour, and benefit, that in this world we can be made partakers of, we have no reason to be weary of God's chastisements, which are designed unto no other end. And we may observe,—

Obs. III. No man can understand the benefit of divine chastisement, who understands not the excellency of a participation of God's holiness.—No man can find any good in a bitter potion, who understands not the benefit of health. If we have not a due valuation of this blessed privilege, it is impossible we should ever make a right judgment concerning our afflictions.

Obs. IV. If under chastisements we find not an increase of holiness, in some especial instances or degrees, they are utterly lost: we have nothing but the trouble and sorrow of them.

Obs. V. There can be no greater pledge or evidence of divine love in afflictions than this, that God designs by them to "make us partakers of his holiness,"—to bring us nearer to him, and make us more like him.

5. The reasons from whence they have their efficacy unto this end, and the way whereby they attain it, are, (1.) God's designation of them thereunto, in an act of infinite wisdom; which gives them their efficacy. (2.) By weaning us from the world, and the love of it, whose vanity and unsatisfactoriness they openly discover, breaking the league of love that is between it and our souls. (3.) By calling us unto the faith and contemplation of things more glorious and excellent, wherein we may find rest and peace.

Ὑποταγησόμεθα. That which is required of us, as children, is, that we be "in subjection" unto him, as "the Father of spirits." This answers unto the having of our earthly parents in reverence, before mentioned;—the same which the apostle Peter calls, "humbling of ourselves under the mighty hand of God," 1 Pet. 5:6. And there may be respect unto the disobedient son under the law, who refused to subject himself to his parents, or to reform upon their correction, Deut. 21:18–21; which I the rather think, because of the consequent assigned unto it, "And live;" whereas the refractory son was to be stoned to death. And this subjection unto God consists in, 1. An acquiescency in his right and sovereignty to do what he will with his own. 2. An acknowledgment of his righteousness and wisdom in all his dealings with us. 3. A sense of his care and love, with a due apprehension of the end of his chastisements. 4. A diligent application of ourselves unto his mind and will, as unto what he calls us unto in an especial manner at that season. 5. In keeping our souls, by faith and patience, from weariness and despondency. 6. In a full resignation of ourselves unto his will, as to the matter, manner, times, and continuance of our affliction.

And where these things are not in some degree, we cast off the yoke of God, and are not in due subjection unto him; which is the land inhabited by the sons of Belial.

Lastly, The consequent of this subjection unto God in our chastisements, is, that "we shall live:" "And," or "for so we shall live." Though in their own nature they seem to tend unto death, or the destruction of the flesh, yet is it life whereunto they are designed,—which is the consequent, which shall be the effect of them, 2 Cor. 4:16–18. The increase of spiritual life in this world, and eternal life in the world to come, are that whereunto they tend. The rebellious son, who would not submit himself to correction, was to die without mercy; but they who are in subjection unto God in his chastisements, shall live.

Hebrews 12: 11

Πᾶσα δὲ παιδεία πρὸς μὲν τὸ παρὸν οὐ δοκεῖ χαρᾶς εἶναι, ἀλλὰ λύπης· ὕστερον δὲ καρπὸν εἰρηνικὸν δὶ αὐτῆς γεγυμνασμένοις ἀποδίδωσι δικαιοσύνης.

Καρπόν. Syr., פְּאֵרָא דִּשְׁלָמָא וְדִזּוּדִיקוּתָא, "the fruit of peace and righteousness." Vulg., "fructum pacatissimum;" "most peaceable," Rhem.; and ἀποδίδωσι it renders in the future, "reddet," for "reddit."

Ver. 11.—Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous; nevertheless, afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness, unto them which are exercised thereby.

This is the close of the apostle's dispute and arguing about sufferings and afflictions, with the use of them, and our duty in bearing them with patience. And he gives it us in a general rule, wherein he balanceth the good and evil of them, showing how incomparably the one exceedeth the other. The same argument he insisteth upon, 2 Cor. 4:17, "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."

And he states his rule so as, by a concession, to obviate an objection against a compliance with his exhortation; and this is taken from the trouble and sorrow therewith chastisement is accompanied. This, therefore, he takes for granted, he will not contend about it; but he takes off all its weight, by opposing the benefit of it thereunto.

Πᾶσα παιδεία. The literal expression in the original is, "But every chastisement at present seems not to be of joy;" that is, none doth seem so to be.

Δέ. The introduction of the whole is by the particle δέ, which some render by "enim," some by "autem;" "for" and "but." There is no more in it (for it is used variously) but an intimation of a progress in discourse. We render it "now," not as an adverb of time, but as a note of attention.

Μέν. The particle μέν is omitted in our translation. Others render it by "quidem," "truly." And where it is so joined in sense with δέ, as here it is, it hath the force of an asseveration, "for truly," or "now truly."

First, In the concession we may observe,—

1. The universality of the expression, "every chastisement," not any excepted: for what is affirmed is of the nature of chastisements; what is not so is none. If any thing that is evil befall a man, if it be no way dolorous unto him, it may be a judgment on him, it is not a chastisement to him.

Πρὸς τὸ παρόν. 2. The time wherein a judgment is made of it, wherein this concession is made: "For the present;"—that is, whilst it is actually on us, whilst we suffer under it, especially in its first ingress and assault; whilst the wound it gives unto the mind is fresh, before it be mollified by the ointment of faith and submission unto God.

Οὐ δοκεῖ. 3. Hereof it is affirmed, that "it seemeth not to be joyous, but grievous;" that is, whatever be spoken of the good of chastisement, it represents itself otherwise unto us, it appears with another face unto us, and we cannot but make another judgment of it. The meaning is not, that it only seems so to be, but is not so; but really so it is, and so we do esteem it.

And the original is, "It is not of joy, but of sorrow;" that is, say some, there is an ellipsis, to be supplied by ποιητική, or some such word,—'It is not effective of joy, but of sorrow.' But this seems not to be the meaning of the words; for it is in the issue really effective of joy also. And the apostle speaks not of it here as unto its effects, but as unto its nature in itself. And so it is not of joy; it belongs not unto things joyous and pleasant. It is not a sweet confection, but a bitter potion. It is of the nature of things sorrowful. It is of sorrow; which we render "grievous." But that word is of an ambiguous signification in our language. Sometimes we render βαρύς by it, 1 John 5:3, Καὶ αἱ ἐντολαὶ αὐτοῦ βαρεῖαι οὐκ εἰσίν,—"And his commandments are not grievous;" that is, "heavy, burdensome:" sometimes λύπη, as in this place; that is, "dolorous and sorrowful." So it is here; a matter of sorrow. It is in the nature of every chastisement to be a matter of sorrow and grief at present unto them that are chastised. This we

render, being "in heaviness," 1 Pet. 1:6,—λυπηθέντες; being "afflicted with sorrow, through manifold temptations," or afflictions. And sundry things we may yet observe, to clear the sense of the place; as,—

Obs. I. When God designeth any thing as a chastisement, it is in vain to endeavour to keep off a sense of it; it shall be a matter of sorrow unto us.—Men are apt in their trials to think it a point of courage and resolution to keep off a sense of them, so as not to be affected with grief about them. It is esteemed a piece of pusillanimity to mourn, or be affected with sorrow about them. It is true, indeed, that so far as they are from men, and are sufferings for the gospel, there is a heroic frame of spirit required to the undergoing of them; so as that it may appear that we are "in nothing terrified by our adversaries." But there is no pusillanimity in us towards God. It is our duty to take in a deep sense of his rebukes and chastisements. And if he doth design any thing that doth befall us as a chastisement, it is in vain for us to contend that it may not be a matter of sorrow unto us. For if it yet be not so, it is but an entrance into his dealing with us. He will not cease, until he hath broken the fierceness and tamed the pride of our spirits, and hath brought us, like obedient children, to submit ourselves under his mighty hand. Wherefore,—

Obs. II. Not to take in a sense of sorrow in affliction, is through stout-heartedness to "despise the chastening of the Lord;" the evil that we are cautioned against, verse 5.

Obs. III. The sorrow intended, which accompanies chastisement, is that which the apostle terms λύπη κατὰ Θεόν, 2 Cor. 7:9, 10; "Sorrow according unto God," or "after a godly sort."—It is not the wailing of the flesh upon a sense of pain; it is not the disorder of our affections upon their encounter with things grievous to our present state and ease; it is not a heartless despondency under our pressures, enfeebling us unto our duties: but it is a filial sense of God's displeasure, accompanied with nature's aversation and declension from things evil unto it and grievous.

Obs. IV. The nature and end of afflictions are not to be measured by our present sense of them.—At present they are dolorous; but the great relief under what is grievous at present in them, is the due consideration of their end and tendency, as unto what they are appointed for of God. And,—

Obs. V. All the trouble of afflictions is but "for the present," at most but for the little while which we are to continue in this world.—Within a very short time we shall leave them and their trouble behind us for evermore.

Secondly, In balance against this matter of sorrow in chastisement, the apostle lays the advantage and benefit of it. And this he doth in three things: 1. By showing what that benefit is; 2. When it is received; and, 3. By whom.

1. For the benefit of chastisement itself, it is expressed in a threefold gradation: (1.) That it "yieldeth fruit," (2.) That this fruit is the "fruit of righteousness." (3.) That this fruit of righteousness is "peaceable."

Καρπὸν ἀποδίδωσι. (1.) It "yieldeth fruit." Not, it will do so, as the Vulgar reads; but it doth so; namely, in the season designed. It is not a dead, useless thing. When God purgeth his vine, it is that it may bear more fruit, John 15:2. When he dresseth his ground, it shall bring forth herbs meet for himself, Heb. 6:7. The whole of God's dealing and design herein is set forth in an elegant allusion unto a husbandman in the management of his corn, Isa. 28:23–29. And this fruit in general is of two sorts: [1.] The taking away of sin, by the mortification of it: "By this therefore shall the iniquity of Jacob be purged; and this is all the fruit to take away his sin," Isa. 27:9. [2.] In the increase of righteousness or holiness; which is here expressed.

Δικαιοσύνης. (2.) This fruit, then, is the "fruit of righteousness;" not righteousness itself, not that fruit which righteousness is, but that which it bears or brings forth. Neither our doing nor our suffering is the cause of our righteousness; but they promote it in us and increase its fruit. So the apostle prays for the Corinthians, that God would "increase" in them "the fruits of their righteousness," 2 Epist. 9:10: and for the Philippians, that they might be "filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God," chap. 1:11. Wherefore by "righteousness" in this place, our sanctification, or the internal principle of holiness and obedience, is intended; and the "fruits" hereof, are its increase in the more vigorous actings of all graces, and their effects in all duties. Especially, the fruits of righteousness here intended, are patience, submission to the will of God, weanedness from the world, mortification of sin, heavenly-mindedness, purity of heart, readiness for the cross, and the like. See Rom. 5:3–5, with John 15:2–4; which places compared, are a full exposition of this.

Εἰρηνικόν. (3.) This fruit of righteousness, which chastisement yieldeth, is "peaceable." "The work of righteousness shall be peace," Isa. 32:17. "The fruit of righteousness is sown in peace," James 3:18. And it is so on a threefold account: [1.] Because it is a pledge and evidence of our peace with God. When we are chastised, especially if our pressures are great or many, we are apt to question

what our state is with respect unto God, who seems to be so displeased with us as to make us the peculiar objects of his anger; but when these fruits are brought forth in us, they are a high evidence that God is at peace with us, and that he designs our eternal good in all these chastisements, Rom. 5:3–5. [2.] Because they bring in peace into our own minds. Afflictions are apt to put our minds into a disorder; our affections will tumultuate, and raise great contests in our souls. But by these fruits of righteousness our hearts are quieted, our minds composed, all tumults allayed, and we are enabled to "possess our souls in patience." [3.] With respect unto other men. The next thing which the apostle giveth us in charge, after he hath discharged his discourse about suffering and afflictions, is, that we should "follow peace with all men," verse 14. Now, the way whereby we may do this, is only by abounding in these fruits of righteousness; for they alone are the way and means of attaining it, if it be possible so to do. And therefore that charge of following peace with all men, is nothing but an injunction to perform all duties of righteousness towards them.

This is the advantage which comes by chastisements, which the apostle lays in the balance against all that is grievous in them.

Ὑστερον δέ. 2. There is the season wherein they yield this fruit; and that is, "afterward:" "Nevertheless," or "but afterward;"—that is, plainly, after we have been a while exercised with them. This effect of them, it may be, doth not appear at first. We have their surprisal, as it was with Job, to conflict withal, which suspends for a while the production of these fruits. So the apostle Peter prays for believers, that ὀλίγον πάθοντας, "after they had suffered a while, God would strengthen and perfect them," 1 Epist. 5:10. And so it is evident in experience. Chastisements do not effectually operate unto this end until after some time of exercise. They first tend to subdue the flesh, to root up weeds, thorns and briers, to break up the stubborn fallow ground, and then to cherish the seeds of righteousness.

Τοῖς δὶ αὐτῆς γεγυμνασμένοις. 3. So it is added in the last place, it yieldeth this fruit "unto them,"—that is, only unto them.—"who are exercised thereby." The word here used signifies an exercise with diligence and vehemence; there being an allusion in it unto those who stripped themselves naked, so as to put out all their strength in their public games, or contests for mastery. See chap. 5:14, with the exposition. Wherefore to be exercised by chastisement, is to have all our spiritual strength, all our faith and patience, tried to the utmost, and acted in all things suitably to the mind of God. So was it with Job.

And what remains for the further explication of these words, is contained in these ensuing observations.

Obs. VI. Those who cannot see an excellency in the abounding of the fruits of righteousness before described, can never apprehend that there is either good or benefit in chastisements.—For this alone is that which the apostle proposeth to answer all that is grievous or evil in them. But these things believers value above life itself, and can esteem well of every thing, be it never so sharp unto the flesh, that doth promote them in their souls.

Obs. VII. We can never find any benefit in chastisements, unless we are "exercised" by them; that is, that all our graces are stirred up by them unto a holy, constant exercise.—For hereby alone do they yield "the peaceable fruit of righteousness."

Obs. VIII. It is the fruit of righteousness alone that will bring in peace unto us, that will give us a sense of peace with God, peace in ourselves, and with others, so far as is possible. And,—

Obs. IX. Grace in afflictions will at length prevail quietly to compose the mind under the storm raised by them, and give rest with peace unto the soul.

Obs. X. Herein lies the wisdom of faith in this matter, not to pass a judgment on chastisements, from the present sense we have of what is evil and dolorous in them, but from their end and use, which are blessed and glorious.

Hebrews 12: 12, 13

In these verses an entrance is made into the second part of the chapter, which is designed unto the application of the doctrine concerning sufferings, afflictions, and chastisements, before insisted on. And there are three parts of it: 1. A general exhortation unto an improvement of the said doctrine, in a conformity of mind unto it. 2. A prescription of sundry important duties, in their joint walking before God unto the same end, verses 14–16. 3. A confirmation of the whole, by an instance or example of one who did all things contrary unto the duties prescribed, namely, Esau; with the severe issue thereon, verses 16, 17. The first of these is contained in these two verses.

Ver. 12, 13.—Διὸ τὰς παρειμένας χεῖρας καὶ τὰ παραλελυμένα γόνατα ἀνορθώσατε· καὶ τροχιὰς ὀρθὰς ποιήσατε τοῖς ποσὶν ὑμῶν, ἵνα μὴ τὸ χωλὸν ἐκτρπῇ, ἰαθῇ δὲ μᾶλλον.

Ver. 12, 13.—Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; and make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed.

διό. 1. "Wherefore," Διό, "quapropter," "quamobrem;" it shows that the ensuing exhortation is wholly derived from the preceding discourse. 'Seeing things in this case are as we have declared, this is your duty thereon.' And in no writing of the New Testament is this method so much observed as in this epistle; namely, to lay down doctrines of truth, to confirm them by divine testimonies and reasons, and then to make the use and application of them. And the reason of it is, because the whole design of the epistle is parenetical, with respect unto practice.

2. For the right understanding of the mind of the Holy Ghost in the words, we must take notice that there is a supposition included in them of some failure in the Hebrews, as unto their courage and constancy in suffering; at least that they were in great danger of it, and that it began to affect the minds of many, and perhaps greatly to prevail in some among them. This he had insinuated before, in the entrance of his discourse on this subject, verses 3–5, and now resumes it as a ground of his exhortation. And,—

Obs. I. It is the duty of all faithful ministers of the gospel to consider diligently what failures or temptations their flocks are liable or exposed unto, so as to apply suitable means for their preservation.

3. The words in general contain an exhortation unto duties, flowing directly from the doctrine insisted on in its application unto these Hebrews. And whereas there were two sorts of them (which distinction the apostle frequently intimates in the epistle); (1.) Such as were really guilty of the evils dehorted from; and, (2.) Such as were not so, at least not in such a degree as some others were; the exhortation respects both sorts of them. Unto the first sort it enjoins their own present duty; and directs the latter how to behave themselves towards those who were so defective; as we shall see in the progress.

Ἀνορθώσατε. 4. That part of the exhortation which is contained in verse 12, is taken from Isa. 35:3, חַזְּקוּ יָדַיִם רָפוֹת וּבִרְכַּיִם כֹּשְׁלוֹת אַמֵּצוּ, "Confortate manus remissas, et genua labantia roborate." The Vulgar Lat. in that place reads, "manus dissolutas," and "genua debilia;" here, "manus remissas," and "genua soluta." The translation of the LXX. renders חַזְּקוּ by ἰσχύσατε, "be ye strong," speaking to the hands and knees in the second person; and אַמֵּצוּ by

παρακαλήσατε; unless that word belongs to the following sentence. The apostle useth one word, applying it to both hands and knees, it being equally proper to both.

5. The way of the proposal of the exhortation is in continued metaphors, in answer to the first prescription of the duty exhorted unto; which was, to run in a race, or to strive for victory, verse 1. And in the verse foregoing he requires of us, in this case, that we should be γεγυμνασμένοι, "exercised," like those that were stripped or made naked for a contest; wherefore,—

6. The exhortation is applied unto the parts of the body which are of principal use in gymnastical exercises, namely, the hands, the knees, and the feet, whereby the body putteth forth all its strength to obtain the prize; the hands and knees being the principal seat of strength and activity. And we must consider, (1.) What is the defect blamed in them; (2.) What is the remedy prescribed unto that defect; (3.) What is the spiritual meaning of both.

Τὰς παρειμένας χεῖρας. (1.) The defect charged on the hands is, that they "hang down," παρειμένας. LXX., ἀνειμένας, "remissas." We want a word exactly to express the Hebrew, רִפּוֹת. It is not so much "hanging down," as "weakened and dissolved in their strength, whence they do hang down." And when it is so with any, they declare themselves weary of what they are engaged in; faint, unready, and giving over.

Τόνατα παραλελυμένα. That charged on the knees is, that they are παραλελυμένα, "soluta," "dissoluta;" or, as in the Hebrew, "labantia." We use a proper word here, and in the prophet, "feeble;" that is, "debilia," weak, whose nervous vigour is dissolved. So we render כָּשְׁלוּ, Ps. 109:24, "My knees are weak through fasting." So, in great weakness, fear, and despondency, the knees are said to smite together, Nahum 2:10.

In both there is a description of a man heartless or slothful, or so fainting in the running of a race as to be ready to cast off all hopes of success, and to give over.

Ἀνορθώσατε. (2.) It is the same kind of distemper which affects these several parts; and therefore the apostle prescribes the same remedy to them both, namely, ἀνορθώσατε, "surripite," "erigite." It is not, 'Elevate,' 'Lift up,' which is proper to the hands only; but, 'Erect or raise them to a due state, frame and posture; set them right again; apply them to their duty.' So in the cure of the woman that had the infirmity wherewith she was bowed down, we render it,

"made straight," Luke 13:13, or upright again; and by "setting up," Acts 15:16; in which two places alone, besides this, the word is found. It is therefore a restoration unto their former state that is directed in this word.

(3.) Wherefore the spiritual sense of the words, or meaning of the similitudes, is plain; and there is no necessity to make a distribution of parts, as unto what is particularly intended by the hands or knees. For by the same kind of defect in both, the fault of the whole is described. Now this is such a decay in Christian courage and resolution, as brings along with it a great weakness and unreadiness for duty.

In our Christian race we are to put forth our utmost spiritual strength and activity. All graces are to be kept up unto their exercise, and all duties to be attended unto with diligence. But where the course is long, or the difficulties are great, we are apt to grow weary, to despond; first to wish it at an end, and then to give over. And this frame ariseth from a composition of two evil ingredients: [1.] Despondency as to success; [2.] Weariness of duty. In them do our hands hang down, and our knees grow feeble.

Obs. II. This is the great evil which, in all our sufferings and afflictions, we are with all intension of mind to watch against. This is the way whereby multitudes have entered into scandalous backslidings, and many into cursed apostasies.

Obs. III. We are apt to pity men who are weary and fainting in their courage, and under their burdens; and we do well therein, for they have spent all their strength, and have no way of supply: but we are to be no way gentle towards ourselves, in our spiritual weariness and decays; because we have continual supplies of strength ready for us, if we use them in a due manner. See Isa. 40:28–31.

Obs. IV. This exhortation being a conclusion or inference made from the preceding discourse, concerning the nature, use and end of sufferings and afflictions, this instruction is given us in a peculiar manner, namely, that we ought to confirm our minds against all discouragements and despondencies under them, by the consideration of God's design in them, and the blessed success which he will give unto them.

Obs. V. The recovery of this frame, or the restoration of our spiritual hands and knees to their former vigour, is by stirring up all grace unto its due exercise, which is torpid and desponding under sloth in this frame.

As this direction concerns others, other professors, other members of the church, and not so much ourselves, it compriseth all the duties of exhortation, consolation, instruction, and prayer, which are useful unto that end.

Καί. Ver. 13.—The first part of this exhortation concerns the inward frame of the minds of men, with respect unto themselves and their own souls. That which follows, verse 13, looks unto their ways, walking and conversation, with respect unto others, that they may receive no damage, but benefit by it. And therefore the apostle doth not herein direct us to strengthen our feet, as he doth our hands and knees; but to "make straight paths" for them, wherein we may walk. And the conjunctive καί, "and," denotes an additional duty.

There are two things in the words: 1. A duty prescribed; 2. An enforcement of it from an evil consequent of its omission; both in terms metaphorical.

Τοῖς ποσὶν ὑμῶν. 1. Our feet are those members of our body which carry us on in our course; which is the ability and activity of our minds for spiritual duties. These feet must have a path to walk in, or they can make no progress. According as that path is right and straight, or crooked and uneven, so will our course be. It is therefore highly incumbent on us to look well unto the paths wherein we are going. And this is here prescribed unto us.

The direction seems to be taken from Prov. 4:26, "Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established;" or rather, "all thy ways shall be ordered aright;" which is the sense of this place.

In order unto a discovery of the duty here prescribed, we must consider, (1.) What are the paths of our feet; (2.) How we are to make them straight.

Τροχιαί. (1.) Our "paths," τροχιαί. Τροχός is "a wheel;" and τροχιά is τῶν τρόχων χάραξις, "the mark made by wheels;" "orbita." So, though it be taken for "semita," "a path," yet it is such a path as is marked out for others, that leaves a track wherein we may be followed. The Vulgar renders it by "gressus," our "steps;" but it is rather the way wherein we tread, which is said to be made straight.

Our obedience unto God is called our "walking before him," namely, all that obedience which he requires in the covenant, Gen. 17:1. The first divine testimony given unto any man, was unto his faith in sacrifice, Gen. 4:4; that is, as expressed with respect unto the atonement to be made by Christ. And the second was unto obedience, under the name of walking with God: "Enoch walked with God," Gen. 5:24. In these two, thus exemplified from the beginning, faith and obedience, doth the life of God in the church consist. And

as this obedience is called our walking, so it is called our path, Ps. 27:11, 119:35, 105; Isa. 26:7; Ps. 23:3, 25:4; Matt. 3:3; Luke 3:4. And these paths are distinguished into the "paths of the righteous" and the upright, and the "paths of the wicked" and the froward;—that is, every one's course of actions, with respect unto God and his will, is his path.

And this is called our path, [1.] Because it is that wherein we are continually conversant. [2.] Because it is that whereby we tend unto the end which we aim at, and that which will certainly bring us thereunto. [3.] Because all the circumstances of our observation of a path, and walking in it, do illustrate the way and manner of our obedience and duties of it, as might be declared.

This path of our obedience may be considered either objectively only; and so it is nothing but the will of God revealed unto us, the canon or rule which we are to walk according unto, that we may have peace, Gal. 6:16. And in this sense the path of all men is one and the same, absolutely invariable; nor can we make it straight or crooked: it is absolutely and perfectly straight in itself. Or it may be considered with respect unto them that walk in it; and so there are degrees of its straightness. Men may continue in it, yet fail variously as to its universal rectitude: they may fail in it, though they do not utterly leave it, or fall from it. So it is affirmed of Peter, and those with him, when they failed in the matter of compliance with the Jews, that they did not ὀρθοποδεῖν, Gal. 2:14,—"walk with a right foot." They continued in the path of the truth of the gospel, but they stumbled in it, they warped in one instance from it.

Ορθὰς ποιήσατε. (2.) And hereby we may understand what is here enjoined in way of duty, namely, "to make these paths straight." For, there are two things herein: [1.] That we walk uprightly in the paths of obedience. Then are our paths straight when we walk uprightly in the paths of God. And as this respects our universal obedience, as it doth everywhere in the Scripture, so I doubt not but regard is had unto halting, or taking some crooked steps in profession during trial. Deserting of church assemblies, forbearance of sundry necessary duties that might be provocations to their adversaries, irregular compliances with the Jews in their worship, are things that the apostle intimates them to have been liable unto. Where these things were, though they forsook not utterly the path of the gospel, yet they walked not in it with a right foot; they failed in the way, though they fell not from it. These things the apostle would have rectified. [2.] That we walk visibly in these paths. This is included both in the signification of the word τροχιαί, and in the precept to make our paths straight; to wit, that they

may be seen and known so to be. For this is necessary unto the end proposed, namely, the preservation of others from being turned out of the way, or their recovery from their wandering.

And therefore I do grant, that the duties especially intended in this precept are, courage, resolution, constancy in profession, with a diligent watch against all crooked compliances or fearful relinquishment of duties. And therefore,—

Obs. I. It is our duty not only to be found in the ways of God in general, but to take care that we walk carefully, circumspectly, uprightly, and diligently in them.—Hereon depend our own peace, and all our usefulness towards others. It is a sad thing when some men's walk in the ways of God shall deter others from them, or turn them out of them. Yet so it falls out in the negligent, careless profession of many.

Obs. II. To make halts or baulks in our way of profession, or crooked paths, in neglect of duty or compliances with the world, in time of trial and persecution, is an evidence of an evil frame of heart, and of a dangerous state or condition.

2. The enforcement of the duty required is the next thing in this verse: "Lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed."

Τὸ χωλόν. The apostle continues in the use of metaphors, according as he began this discourse. And having described our careful obedience, by "making straight paths for our feet," he calls that or those which are defective therein, "lame;" "that which is lame." The Vulg. reads the words, "ut non claudicans qui erret;" which the Rhemists render, "that no man halting err," without any good sense. The Syriac, "that the member which is lame." The principal internal hinderance from walking is lameness. He that is lame can make but slow progress, and is often ready by his halting to stumble out of the way. Lameness, therefore, is some defect that is distinguished from external hinderances, and from mere fainting or weariness, (whereof the apostle had spoken before, which may befall them that are not lame,) which obstructs men in their progress, and makes them be easily turned out of the way: besides, it includes an inward disease and distemper in particular, whence the apostle says, it is to be "healed"

And by the way we may observe, that sundry diseases, weaknesses, and lamenesses, are apt to fall out in the flock of God. These he promiseth himself to be tender toward, and to heal, Zech. 11:15, 16; as he severely threatens those shepherds by whom they are neglected, Ezek. 34:4, etc.

Considering what at this time was the state of the Hebrews who had received the doctrine of the gospel, as both this epistle and the story of them in the Acts of the Apostles do declare; as also what fell out afterwards among them; I do judge that by this τὸ χωλόν among them, "that which is lame," the apostle peculiarly intends those that would retain the Judaical ceremonies and worship together with the doctrine of the gospel. For hereby they were made weak and infirm in their profession, as being defective in light, resolution, and steadiness; as also, seemed to halt between two opinions, as the Israelites of old between Jehovah and Baal. This was that which was lame at that time among these Hebrews. And it may, by analogy, be extended unto all those who are under the power of such vicious habits, inclinations, or neglects, as weaken and hinder men in their spiritual progress.

Ἐκτραπῇ. The caution concerning this sort of persons is, that they be not "turned out of the way." To be "turned out of the way," is to be turned off from the profession of the gospel. This those who were "lame," as before described, were very liable and subject unto; a small matter would turn them aside, as afterwards many of them were turned off from the truth. The apostle doth not thereon declare a displeasure against them; he is not angry with them, but adviseth others to deal carefully and tenderly with them, avoiding every thing that might give occasion unto their turning aside.

Ἰαθῇ δὲ μᾶλλον. And this the apostle extends to their healing: "But rather let it be healed," "To be healed," is not opposed to "to be turned aside," as though that word should signify a further breach or luxation of that which is lame; but it denotes the cure of him that is lame, by a continuation of the same metaphor. 'Be so far from doing or omitting any thing, which might give them occasion to turn from the way, as that you endeavour the removal of those causes of lameness which you see in them.' And the sense of the words may be included in the ensuing observations.

Obs. III. A hesitation or doubtfulness in or about important doctrines of truth, will make men lame, weak, and infirm in their profession. And,—

Obs. IV. Those who are so, are disposed unto a total defection from the truth, and are ready on all occasions to go out of the way. Also, in general,—

Obs. V. Every vicious habit of mind, every defect in light or neglect of duty, every want of stirring up grace unto exercise, will make men lame and halt in profession, and easy to be turned aside with difficulties and oppositions.

Obs. VI. When we see persons in such a state, it is our duty to be very careful so to behave ourselves as not to give any occasion to their further miscarriages, but rather to endeavour their healing.

Obs. VII. The best way whereby this may be done, is by making visible and plain unto them our own faith, resolution, courage, and constancy, in a way of obedience becoming the gospel. Hereby we shall both excite, promote, and direct them, in and unto their duty. For,—

Obs. VIII. The negligent walking of those professors who are sound in the faith, their weakness and pusillanimity in times of trial, their want of making straight paths for their feet in visible holiness, are a great means of turning aside those that are lame, weak, and halting.

Obs. IX. It is good to deal with and endeavour the healing of such lame halters whilst they are yet in the way; when they are quite turned out, their recovery will be difficult, if not impossible.

Hebrews 12: 14

From his exhortation unto patient perseverance in the profession of the gospel, under sufferings and afflictions, the apostle proceeds unto a prescription of practical duties; and although they are such as are absolutely necessary in themselves at all times, yet they are here peculiarly enjoined with respect unto the same end, or our constancy in professing the gospel. For no light, no knowledge of the truth, no resolution or courage, will preserve any man in his profession, especially in times of trial, without a diligent attendance unto the duties of holiness and gospel obedience. And he begins with a precept general and comprehensive of all others.

Ver. 14.—Εἰρήνην διώκετε μετὰ πάντων, καὶ τὸν ἁγιασμὸν, οὗ χωρὶς οὐδεὶς ὄψεται τὸν Κύριον.

Διώκετε. Vulg., "sequimini;" others, "sectamini," which comes nearer the original, and denotes a vehement pursuit. Syr., הַרְטוּ בָּתַר, "run after" peace. We elsewhere translate the same word in the same duty, by "pursue" and "ensue," Ps. 34:14; 1 Pet. 3:11.

Ver. 14.—Earnestly follow peace with all [men], and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.

The direction here given is general, consisting of two parts; the first whereof contains our duty towards men; and the other our duty towards God, whereby the former is to be regulated.

In the first we have, 1. The duty prescribed; which is "peace." 2. The manner of the attaining it, or the way of the performance of the duty enjoined; which is "earnestly to follow it." 3. Those with whom we are to seek peace; which are "all men."

Εἰρήνην. 1. The substance of our duty towards all men as men, in all circumstances and relations, is to seek peace with them. And that we may have peace with all men, at least that we may do our duty to attain it, three things are required: (1.) Righteousness. "The fruit of righteousness is peace." To wrong no man, to give every one his due, to do unto all men as we would have them do unto us, are required hereunto. The want hereof is the cause of all want of peace, of all confusions, disorders, troubles, and wars in the world. (2.) Usefulness. That we may have peace in a due manner, it is not enough that we hurt no man, defraud no man, injure no man; but it is moreover required of us, that in our station and calling, according unto our circumstances and abilities we be useful unto all men, in all duties of piety, charity, and beneficence. Gal. 6:10, "As we have opportunity, ἐργαζώμεθα τὸ ἀγαθὸν πρὸς πάντας,"—"let us be useful," profitable, beneficial, working that which is good, "unto all men." This is required of us in that divine law of human society under which we are stated. (3.) Avoiding of just offence. "Give none offence, neither to the Jews nor to the Gentiles," 1 Cor. 10:32.

These are the ways and means whereby we must "earnestly follow peace with all men." We are not to do it by a compliance with them in any evil;—not by a neglect of any duty; not by any thing that intrencheth on holiness towards God. Peace with men is not to be followed nor practised at any such rate. We must eternally bid defiance unto that peace with men which is inconsistent with peace with God.

These ways of following peace with all men are such as carry along with them their own satisfaction and reward, although the end be not attained. For this ofttimes depends on the minds of other men, even such as are "like the troubled sea, whose waters cast up mire and dirt," who have no peace in themselves, nor will let others be at peace, Ps. 120:6, 7. Hence the apostle gives that limitation unto our endeavours for peace: "If it be possible," and, "what lieth in you, live peaceably with all men," Rom. 12:18.

Διώκετε. 2. From these difficulties ariseth the injunction of the especial way and manner of seeking it: "Earnestly follow." We render the same word by "pursue," Ps. 34:14; and "ensue," 1 Pet. 3:11. And it is in both places spoken of as

that which exceeds in earnestness and diligence in the seeking of it. It is that which will fly from us, and which we must with all earnestness pursue, or we shall not overtake it. Both the words, in the Hebrew and Greek, do signify "to persecute;" which we know is the fiercest of prosecution. And this is so expressed, because of the many ways and pretences which most men use to avoid peace with those who profess the gospel. All these, as much as in us lieth, we are to overcome in the pursuit of peace, never giving it over whilst we are in this world.

Μετὰ πάντων. 3. And this we are to do "with all men;" that is, all sorts of men, according as we stand in relation unto them, or have occasion of converse with them. The worst of men are not excepted out of this rule;—not our enemies, not our persecutors; we are still, by all the ways mentioned, to follow peace with them all. Let this alone be fixed, that we are not obliged unto any thing that is inconsistent with holiness, that is contrary to the word of God, that is adverse to the principles and light of our own minds and consciences, for the obtaining of peace with any or all the men in the world, and this rule is absolute and universal. Wherefore,—

Obs. I. A frame and disposition of seeking peace with all men, by the means before laid down, is eminently suited unto the doctrine and grace of the gospel. —A froward spirit, apt and ready for strife and contention, to give and receive provocations, to retain a sense of injuries, to be satisfied with uselessness whilst it is supposed they do no wrong, is quite contrary to what the gospel requireth of us. The glory of the kingdom of Christ therein is frequently promised under the name of peace, with a cessation of wars and contentions among men. And an evidence this is how little of the power of the gospel remains at present in the minds of men in the world, when all things amongst those who are called Christians are filled with hatred, strife, persecutions, and savage wars. But this frame is, 1. A great ornament to our profession. A man cannot, in the eyes of men not utterly flagitious and hardened in sin, more adorn the gospel, than by evidencing that in his whole course he doth what in him lies to follow after peace with all men. 2. A great comfort and supportment unto ourselves in our sufferings. For when we have the testimony of our consciences that we have sincerely sought peace with all men, it will not only make us rest satisfied in what they unjustly do unto us, but give us a triumph over them in our minds, in that we have attained a compliance with the will of God above them herein.

Καὶ τὸν ἁγιασμόν. The second thing enjoined respects our duty towards God. And there are two things in the words: 1. The duty itself enjoined; and that is holiness. 2. The enforcement of it from its absolute necessity in order unto our eternal blessedness; for without it, destitute of it, we shall never see the Lord.

1. It refers to the same way of seeking it, namely, to "follow it earnestly," to pursue it by all ways and means appointed unto that end.

Some by "holiness" here understand peculiarly the holiness or purity of chastity; for so is the word used, 1 Thess. 4:3, "For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication." There is a peculiar defilement in the sins that are against the body, as the apostle declares, 1 Cor. 6:18, 19. Wherefore the sanctification of the body (1 Thess. 5:23) by this grace may be peculiarly called our holiness. Besides, the "seeing of God" here referred unto, is peculiarly promised unto "the pure in heart," Matt. 5:8; because the mind is thereby peculiarly prepared for the divine vision.

But there is no cogent reason why we should restrain the signification of the word. It is universal holiness which is here prescribed unto us. This we are in all things always to follow after. What this evangelical holiness is, what is its nature, wherein it doth consist, what is required unto it, by what means it may be attained and preserved, how it differs from morality, or the virtues of the best of unbelievers; I have declared at large in another discourse, and shall not here again insist upon it.

Οὗ χωρὶς οὐδεὶς ὄψεται τὸν Κύριον. 2. The enforcement of this duty is in these words, "Without which no man shall see the Lord." It is all one whether we understand God absolutely, or the Lord Christ in an especial manner, by the name "Lord;" for we shall never see the one without the other. Christ prays for us, that we may be where he is, to behold his glory, John 17:24. This we cannot do but when we see God also, or the eternal glory of God in him. This sight of God in Christ, which is intellectual, not corporeal; finite, not absolutely comprehensive of the divine essence; is the sum of our future blessedness. The nature of it I have elsewhere explained. Now this future sight of the Lord doth depend peremptorily on our present holiness. It doth not do so as the meritorious cause of it; for be we never so holy, yet in respect of God we are "unprofitable servants," and "eternal life is the gift of God by Jesus Christ." But it doth so on a double account: οὗ χωρίς (1.) Of an eternal, unchangeable, divine constitution. God hath enacted it, as an eternal law, that holiness shall be the way of our attaining and coming to blessedness. (2.) As it is a due preparation for

it, the soul being by holiness made meet and fit to come to the sight of the Lord, Col. 1:12, 13. And therefore οὗ χωρίς is well rendered, "quâ destitutus," whereof whoever is destitute, in whom this holiness is not, he shall never see the Lord. And,—

Obs. II. They are much mistaken in the Lord Christ, who hope to see him hereafter in glory, and live and die here in an unholy state. It is not privileges, nor gifts, nor church office or power, that will give an admission to this state.

Obs. III. If this doctrine be true, that "without holiness no man shall see the Lord," the case will be hard at last with a multitude of popes, cardinals, and prelates, who pretend that they have the opening of the door into his presence committed unto them.

Obs. IV We may follow peace with men, and not attain it; but if we follow holiness, we shall as assuredly see the Lord, as we shall come short of this without it.

Obs. V. The same means is to be used for the securing of our present perseverance and of our future blessedness, namely, holiness.

Hebrews 12: 15

From a prescription of necessary duties, the apostle proceedeth to give caution and warning against sundry sins and evils that are contrary unto them, and such as, if admitted, would prove ruinous unto their profession. And concerning these he gives his caution not directly unto individual persons, but unto the whole church, or society of professors, with respect unto their mutual duty among themselves.

Ver. 15.—Ἐπισκοποῦντες μή τις ὑστερῶν ἀπὸ τῆς χάριτος τοῦ Θεοῦ· μή τις ῥίζα πικρίας ἄνω φύουσα ἐνοχλῆ, καὶ διὰ ταύτης μιανθῶσι πολλοί.

Ἐπισκοποῦντες. Vulg., "contemplantes." The Rhemists more properly, "looking diligently." Syr., וְהַוְיָתִין זְהִירִין, "and be ye watchful," "take ye heed." "Prospicientes," "superintendentes;" "using a diligent inspection and oversight."

Μή τις ὑστερῶν, "ne quis desit gratiae Dei." Rhem., "lest any man be wanting to the grace of God;" which mistake in the translation some expositors of the Roman church make use of to prove that all the efficacy of divine grace depends on the use of our free-will in compliance with it. Syr., "lest a man" (any man) "be found among you דְּהִסְיר מִן טַיְבוּתָא דַּאלָהָא," "destitute or forsaken of the grace of God." "Ne quis deficiat à gratia Dei;" "come behind," "come short," or "fail." We put "fall from" in the margin; which the word doth not signify.

Ῥίζα πικρίας, "radix amaritudinis," "radix amara;" that is, שֹׁרֶשׁ פֹּרֶה רֹאשׁ וְלַעֲנָה, Deut. 29:17, "a root that beareth gall" (or "poison") "and wormwood."

Ἐνοχλῇ. Vulg., "impediat," "do hinder." "Obturbet," "should trouble."

Ver. 15.—Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble [you], and thereby many be defiled.

What is required of us in our own persons was before prescribed in positive duties; here is declared what is our work and duty towards others, with respect unto sins contrary to those duties. For this and the ensuing instructions concern the body of the church, or society of the faithful, as unto what is mutually required of them and amongst them. And although the practice be always lost in the world, the rule abides for ever.

There are two things in the words: 1. A duty enjoined, "Looking diligently." 2. A double evil cautioned against, to be prevented by the exercise of that duty: (1.) "Any man's failing of the grace of God:" wherein we must inquire, [1.] What is meant by "the grace of God;" [2.] How any man may "fail" of it. (2.) A "root of bitterness springing up," etc: and hereof we must inquire, [1.] What is this "root of bitterness;" [2.] What is the progress of the evil contained in it; as, 1st. It "springeth up;" 2dly. It "troubles all;" 3dly. It "defiles many."

And there is a progress in evil intimated, from the less to the greater. It is a less evil for any one to "fail of the grace of God" in his own person, (though the greatest of evils unto himself,) than to be a "root of bitterness to trouble and defile others" also. And the apostle would have us obstare principiis, to hinder the entrance of this evil, and so effectually to prevent its progress.

Ἐπισκοποῦντες. 1. The duty prescribed is, to "look diligently" after this matter. The word is only twice used in the Scripture, here and 1 Pet. 5:2. And in that place of Peter it denotes the discharge of the office-duty of the elders of the church, in their care and oversight of the flock. Here it respects the common charitative duty of all believers, as they are called unto it by occasions and circumstances. So there are sundry other duties, which are given in charge unto the officers or guides of the church, to be authoritatively attended unto, and discharged by virtue of their office, which yet, being in themselves of a moral nature, are incumbent on all believers in a way of love or charity.

But this looking diligently unto the good of others, and to prevent their evil, is not here prescribed as a moral duty, whereunto we are obliged by the light of nature and royal law of love, but as that which is also an especial institution of Christ, to be observed in his church. The Lord Christ hath ordained, that the

members of the same church or society should mutually watch over one another, and the whole body over all the members, unto their edification. This therefore is here prescribed unto these Hebrews; and that the practice of it is so much lost as it is, is the shame and almost ruin of Christianity.

The word signifies a careful inspection unto a certain end. And hereof there are two parts: first, The promotion of spiritual good; secondly, The prevention of all that is spiritually or morally evil. Hereunto it is peculiarly applied by the apostle in this place. And he instanceth in four things in this and the following verse: (1.) Failing of the grace of God; (2.) The springing up of a bitter root; (3.) Fornication; (4.) Profaneness: wherein he compriseth the principal sins of the flesh and of the spirit which professed Christians are in danger of. And he doth it in a regular gradation, from the lowest declension from grace unto the highest contempt and defiance of it; as we shall see in the opening of the words.

Μή τις ὑστερῶν ἀπὸ τῆς χάριτος τοῦ Θεοῦ. 2. (1.) The first evil to be obviated by this churches-inspection, is failing of the grace of God: "Lest any man fail of the grace of God."

[1.] By the "grace of God," God's gracious favour and acceptance in Christ, as it is proposed and declared by the gospel, is intended. Herein all spiritual mercies and privileges, in adoption, justification, sanctification, and consolation, do consist. For these things proceeding from the love, grace, and goodness of God in Christ, and being effects thereof, are called "the grace of God." The attaining and participation of these things, is that which in the faith and profession of the gospel men aim at and design; without which both the one and the other are in vain.

[2.] This grace, under all their profession of the gospel, men may "fail of;" which is the evil cautioned against. The word ὑστερέω signifies sometimes "to want, or be deficient in any kind," Matt. 19:20; Luke 15:14, 22:35: sometimes "to come behind," 1 Cor. 1:7; 2 Cor. 11:5: sometimes "to be destitute," Heb. 11:37: sometimes "to fail or come short of," as Rom. 3:23; Heb. 4:1. See the exposition of that place. It nowhere signifies to fall from: so that the inquiries of men about falling from grace, as unto these words, are impertinent. Wherefore, to "fail of grace," is to come short of it, not to obtain it, though we seem to be in the way thereunto. See Rom. 11:7, 9:30, 31. So also to "fall from grace," Gal. 5:4, is nothing but not to obtain justification by the faith of Christ.

This, therefore, is that which the apostle intimates, namely, that there were, at least there might be, in the church, some or many, who, under the profession of the truth of the gospel, yet, through their sloth, negligence, formality, unbelief, or some other vicious habits of their minds, might not attain unto the grace and favour of God, exhibited therein unto sincere believers. For this comes not to pass without their own guilt. And the mind of the Holy Ghost in the words may be comprised in the ensuing observations.

Obs. I. The grace, love, and good-will of God, in the adoption, justification, sanctification, and glorification of believers, is proposed unto all in the gospel, as that which may infallibly be attained in the due use of the means thereunto appointed; namely, sincere faith in Christ Jesus.

Obs. II. The outward profession of the gospel, with the performance of the duties and enjoyment of the privileges thereunto belonging, will not of themselves instate any man in the grace of God, or an assured interest therein. —Men deceive themselves when they rest in these things. And multitudes do so; yea, the most are angry if they are told that there is any more required of them.

Obs. III. There is no man who, under the profession of the gospel, comes short of obtaining the grace and favour of God, but it is by reason of himself and his own sin.—The proposal of it, on the terms expressed in the gospel, is sure, and none shall ever fail of it who embrace it on these terms. This is included in the word, which hath a charge in it of a vicious deficiency in seeking after this grace.

Obs. IV. Negligence and sloth, missing of opportunities, and love of sin, all proceeding from unbelief, are the only causes why men under the profession of the gospel, do fail of the grace of God.

Now this is the first thing which the apostle enjoins believers to exercise their church-inspection about, namely, lest there should be amongst them unsound professors; such as, through their negligence, carelessness, and fostering the love of some sin, or of the world, were not like to attain unto the grace of God, on the terms of the gospel. These they were to consider in all their circumstances and temptations, to instruct, exhort, warn, and admonish, that they might be brought unto sincerity in faith and obedience. This was their charitative episcopacy; this was the duty, this was the practice of the members of churches of old: and it is not to be admired if many churches now come short of them in faith and holiness, seeing the very duties whereby they might be

preserved and promoted are lost or despised. Whatever is pretended to the contrary, if any one should endeavour the reduction of some such known duties into the practice of churches, he would be laughed to scorn.

This is the first and the least degree of men's miscarriage under the profession of the gospel; yet is it that from whence all the rest of the evils mentioned do arise and proceed. For of this sort of men it is,—from them that fail of the grace of God under the profession of the gospel, as unto a real interest therein,—that those who fall into the ensuing crimes do come.

(2.) The next evil cautioned against, is the "springing up of the root of bitterness." And we must inquire, [1.] What is this "root of bitterness; [2.] How it "springeth up;" [3.] How it "troubles" all; [4.] How it "defileth many:" which is the progress here assigned unto it by the apostle.

Ῥίζα πικρίας. [1.] As to the first, all agree that the apostle hath respect unto the words of Moses, Deut. 29:18, "Lest there should be among you a root that beareth gall and wormwood." Gall, or hemlock, was a poisonous weed in the eastern countries, as Hos. 10:4; and these names are applied unto poisonous sins, Amos 6:12; Deut. 32:32. Now it is evident, that, in the words of Moses, by this "root," a person, or persons inclining to apostasy and departure from God are intended. So the foregoing words do make it manifest, "Lest there should be among you man, or woman, or family, or tribe, whose heart turneth away this day from the LORD our God, to go and serve the gods of these nations;" that is, "Lest there should be among you a root that beareth gall and wormwood." 'Be it one or more, "man or woman, family or tribe," that is thus affected, it is a "root of bitterness" among you.' Hence it is evident what or who it is that the apostle intendeth. It is not any evil in the abstract, any heresy or sin, but persons guilty of this evil, which he intends. And this is that which in another place he expresseth by "an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God;" which he cautioneth these Hebrews to exercise their mutual inspection about, as he doth in this place, chap. 3:12–14. See the exposition. Wherefore this "root of bitterness," is persons in the church whose hearts are inclined and disposed unto apostasy from the gospel, on one pretence or another, with a return either to Judaism or sensuality of life, as the following instances do also intimate. And this exactly answers the sin condemned in Moses, of a "heart turning away from the LORD our God." And it is evident that there were many such at that time among the professing Hebrews.

And this evil is called a "root of bitterness:" 1st. A "root," and that on a double account: (1st.) Because at the beginning it is hidden in the hearts of men, where it cannot be discovered. So speaks Moses, "Whose heart turneth away." So it is with roots, until they discover themselves by springing up. (2dly.) Because from hence, from this "evil heart of unbelief," doth the whole evil of apostasy in every way proceed, as fruit from its proper root. And 2dly. It is called a root of "bitterness," because of its noxious and poisonous qualities in them in whom it is, and unto others also.

Ἄνω φὺουσα. [2.] Towards the completing of the evil intended, it is said that this root "springeth up." This is the natural way whereby a root discovers itself, both where it is and of what nature. Generally, when men's hearts are inclined unto apostasy from the gospel, as then to Judaism, and now to Popery, they conceal it for a season, like a root in the earth; but as they have opportunity they begin to discover what is within. And several ways they do so. Commonly they begin the discovery of themselves in the neglect of church assemblies and duties, as the apostle declares, Heb. 10:24, 25; thence they proceed to perverse disputings, and contentions against the truth, 1 Tim. 6:5; and so go on to manifest themselves in practices, as occasions, opportunities, and advantages are ministered. This root will not always lie covered, this evil heart will manifest itself: which is the springing up which is here intended.

Ἐνοχλῇ. [3.] The first effect hereof in the church is trouble springing up; "do trouble you." It doth so, it will do so, in and upon its springing up. The word is nowhere used in the Scripture but in this place. It is "to give trouble by bringing things into disorder, tumult, and confusion." And a threefold trouble is, or may be, given unto the church by this means: 1st. A trouble of sorrow and grief, for the evil, sin, and eternal ruin, of these who have been united with them in the same society of the profession of the gospel. It is no small trouble, unto them who have the bowels of Christian compassion, to see men wilfully ruining their own souls, as they do in this case, Heb. 10:26–29. 2dly. When those in whom this root is are either confident or many, they will trouble the church, disorder it, and cast things into confusion, by wrangling disputes, speaking perverse things, endeavouring to draw disciples, to corrupt and deceive; as is the way and manner of all apostates. 3dly. They trouble the church, by bringing an evil report upon it, for divisions, contentions, and instability; ofttimes also, by one means or another, exposing it to external trouble and persecution. This is the first effect which the springing up of this root of bitterness in churches, or among

professors of the gospel, doth produce; it troubleth them. And herein the apostle includeth an argument unto the diligent inspection which he exhorts unto, namely, the prevention of this trouble in the church.

Διὰ ταύτης. [4.] The last effect of it, the utmost of its progress, is, that "many be defiled" by it. "And thereby,"—by this root, so springing up, and bearing this fruit of trouble. A dangerous thing it is to have such things fall out in churches; namely, that there be amongst them a man or woman, a family or tribe, few or more, that on any pretences incline unto a departure from the truth of the gospel. It seldom stops with themselves. The ignorance, negligence, darkness, but especially the want of experience of the power of the truth of the gospel, are easily imposed on by them, and thereby they are defiled. And thus it often falls out, not with one or two, but with "many." Πολλοί. Ofttimes whole churches have been ruined by this means; yea, hereby a fatal apostasy was introduced in all the visible churches of the world.

Μιανθῶσι. There is no difficulty in the expression of the apostle, of their being "defiled;" as though it were not proper to be defiled by a root springing up. For the apostle doth not speak of the manner of its operation and infection, but of the effect it produceth; and this is, that men who have been cleansed by baptism, and the profession of the truth, should be again contaminated with abominable errors, or filthy lusts, as it is fully declared, 2 Pet. 2:18–22. And we may observe,—

Obs. V. That the root of apostasy from God and the profession of the gospel may abide invisibly in professing churches.—So our apostle declares it at large, 2 Tim. 2:16–21; with the reason of it. And we may hence infer, 1. That we ought not to be surprised when any such root discovereth itself by springing up; it is no more but what we are warned of. 2. That in such a season it is divine election that secures true believers from apostasy and defilement, 2 Tim. 2:19, Matt. 24:24.

Obs. VI. Spiritual evils in churches are progressive.—From small, imperceptible beginnings, they will grow and increase to the worst of evils, 2 Tim. 2:17, 3:13. And it will hence follow, that it is the duty of churches to watch against the first risings and entrances of such evils amongst them; which is here given them in charge.

Obs. VII. It is the duty of churches, what in them lies, to prevent their own trouble, as well as the ruin of others.

Obs. VIII. There is a latent disposition in negligent professors to receive infection by spiritual defilements, if they are not watched against,—"Many will be defiled."

Obs. IX. That church-inspection is a blessed ordinance and duty, which is designed by Christ himself as a means to prevent these contagious evils in churches.—And the neglect of it is that which hath covered some of them with all manner of defilements.

Hebrews 12: 16, 17

Μή τις πόρνος ἢ βέζηλος ὡς Ἠσαῦ, ὅς ἀντὶ βρώσεως μιᾶς ἀπέδοτο τὰ πρωτοτόκια αὐτοῦ· ἴστε γὰρ ὅτι καὶ μετέπειτα θέλων κληρονομῆσαι τὴν εὐλογίαν ἀπεδοκιμάσθη· μετανοίας γὰρ τόπον οὐχ εὗρε, καίπερ μετὰ δακρύων ἐκζητήσας αὐτήν.

Μή τις πόρνος. Syr., "lest any man should be found among you who is a fornicator." Ἡ βέβηλος. Syr., וְרַכָּא, and "fainting," or a backslider.

Ἀντὶ βρώσεως μιᾶς. Vulg., "propter unam escam." Rhem., "one dish of meat." Bez., "uno edulio;" "one morsel," something to be eaten at once. We say, "one morsel of meat;" but it was "broth," which is no less "edulium" than "meat."

Ἴστε γάρ. Vulg., "scitote enim." "For know ye," imperatively. "For ye do know." Syr., יְדַעִין אַנְהוּן, "you are knowing of it."

Ver. 16, 17.—Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright. For ye know that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears.

The apostle proceeds to give other instances of such evils as whereby Christian societies would be corrupted, and way made for total apostasy; which were to be diligently heeded and carefully watched against. And the end hereof is, that either such evils may be prevented, or those who are guilty of them be recovered, (the difficulty whereof in the latter instance is declared), or be cast out of the church, that it be not defiled; which are the ends of this inspection.

He puts together "fornication" and "profaneness;" and that probably for these three reasons: 1. Because they are, as it were, the heads of the two sorts of sins that men may be guilty of, namely, sins of the flesh, and sins of the mind, Eph. 2:3. 2. Because they usually go together. Fornicators,—that is, those who are habitually so,—do always grow profane; and profane persons, of all other sins, are apt to set light by fornication. These things are written with the beams of

the sun in the days wherein we live. 3. They are the especial sins whose relinquishment by sincere repentance is most rare. Few fornicators or profane persons do ever come to repentance.

It is one of these alone, namely, profaneness, whereof we have an instance in Esau. The Scripture mentioneth nothing of his fornication. His taking of wives from among the Hittites,—who seem to have been proud, evil, idolatrous persons, in that they were "a grief of mind," or a bitter provocation, "unto Isaac and to Rebekah," Gen. 26:34, 35,—cannot be called fornication, as the sense of the word was then restrained, when the evil of polygamy was not known.

There is in the words, 1. The evils to be watched against, in the way and manner before declared. 2. An effectual motive to abstain from the latter of them, taken from the example of one who was guilty of it, and the success of that guilt; which was Esau. 3. In that example we may observe, (1.) That he is charged with this sin of profaneness; (2.) The way whereby he manifested himself so to be, or wherein his profaneness did consist; (3.) The issue of it; (4.) His vain attempt to recover himself from that condition whereinto he was cast by his profaneness: all which must be opened.

Μή τις πόρνος. 1. The first evil mentioned is "fornication." But the caution is given, as unto the church, with respect unto persons in the first place: "That there be no fornicator." Reference is had unto the former charge: 'Look ye to it diligently, that there be no fornicator in your society. Take care that no persons fall into that sin; or if they do, let them be removed from among you. The sin is evil unto them, but the communion of their persons is evil unto you.'

Now, because the apostle placeth this evil, with that which follows, at the door of final apostasy, and doth more than intimate the difficulty, if not the moral impossibility, of the recovery of those who are guilty of them, we must inquire into the nature of it, and thereon its danger. And,—

(1.) This sin is most directly and particularly opposite unto that holiness which he is exhorting them unto, as that without which they shall not see the Lord. And some do judge, that by "holiness" in that place, the contrary habit unto fornication is intended. However, this is peculiarly opposite unto gospel holiness and sanctification, as the apostle declares, 1 Cor. 6:18–20. And it is that sin which men who are forsaking the profession of holiness do usually fall into, as experience testifieth.

(2.) Though here and elsewhere the sin of fornication be severely interdicted, yet in this place the apostle doth not intend every such person as may, through temptation, be surprised into that sin, nor will one fact give this denomination; but those who live in this sin, who are fornicators habitually,—such as are placed at the head of them that shall never inherit the kingdom of God, 1 Cor. 6:9. Such are to be excluded out of the church, as a certain pledge and token of their exclusion out of heaven. It is no wonder, therefore, if the apostle intimates a great difficulty of the recovery of such.

(3.) Under this name of "fornicator," or fornication, all sins of the same kind are intended. For the Scripture calls all conjunction with women, not in lawful marriage, by the name of fornication, 1 Cor. 5:9–12; Eph. 5:5; 1 Tim. 1:10. So that by "fornicators," whoremongers and adulterers, as it is expressed, Heb. 13:4, or all such as sin against their own bodies, be it in or out of the state of wedlock, be it with single or married persons, are intended. Wherefore the warning doth not respect the practice of the Gentiles at that time, wherein the fornication of single persons was lightly set by; nor the licentiousness of the Jews, who thought it no sin to accompany with a heathen, at least if she were not in wedlock; but it is general, as unto all who are so guilty of uncleanness as to come under this denomination.

(4.) This is a sin, which when men are habitually given up unto, they are never, or very rarely, recovered from it. When any sensual lust hath obtained a habitual predominancy in any, it doth contract so intimate a league with the flesh, as it is hardly eradicated. Such sins do usually keep men secure unto the future judgment. Hence God, for the punishment of idolatry, gave some up unto uncleanness, through the lusts of their own hearts, Rom. 1:24–26, namely, that by them they might be secured unto that eternal vengeance which they had deserved.

(5.) There is no sort of sinners that would be so scandalous unto churches, should they be tolerated in them, as fornicators. And therefore the Pagans endeavoured, in the utmost of their malice and false accusations, to fasten the charge of adulteries, incests, promiscuous lusts and uncleanness, on Christians in their assemblies. For they knew full well, that let them pretend what else they pleased, if they could fix this stain upon them, they would be the common hatred and scorn of mankind. For the higher men's pretences are unto God and religion, if they issue in such vile lusts, they are the more contemptible, and the more to be abhorred. Whereas, therefore, the church doth make a peculiar profession of a separation and dedication unto God, in holiness, purity of heart

and life, nothing can be a greater reproach unto it than that fornicators should be found in its communion. And the carelessness of the visible church herein for some ages, suffering licentiousness of life in the lusts of the flesh to diffuse itself greatly amongst its members, being promoted in the clergy by an interdiction of lawful marriage unto them, proved its ruin. And,—

Obs. I. That church which tolerates in its communion men living in such gross sins as fornication, is utterly, as unto its discipline, departed from the rule of the gospel. And it is also hence evident, that,—

Obs. II. Apostatizing professors are prone to sins of uncleanness.—For being overcome of the flesh, and brought into bondage, as 2 Pet. 2:19, they are slaves and debtors unto it, to serve it in the lusts of uncleanness.

Ἡ βέβηλος. 2. The second evil to be watched against is "profaneness;" or that there be no profane person among them. For it is persons that are firstly intended, as is evident in the instance of Esau. To be "profane," may be taken passively or actively. In the first sense, it is a person or place separated and cast out from the society of things sacred. So holy things are said to be profaned, when men take off the veneration that is due unto them, and expose them to common use or contempt. "To profane," is to violate, to corrupt, to prostitute to common use, things sacred and holy, either in their nature or by divine institution. "Profane" actively, is one that despiseth, sets light by, or contemneth sacred things. Such as mock at religion, or who lightly regard its promises and threatenings, who despise or neglect its worship, who speak irreverently of its concerns, we call profane persons; and such they are, and such the world is filled withal at this day.

This profaneness is the last step of entrance into final apostasy. When men, from professors of religion, become despisers of and scoffers at it, their state is dangerous, if not irrecoverable.

Ὡ Ἡσαῦ. 3. An instance of this evil is given us in Esau: "A profane person, as Esau." 'That is,' say some, 'he was the type of a profane person; it doth not appear that he was such himself.' But the apostle calls him expressly, a "profane person," and declares how he evidenced himself so to be, or wherein his profaneness did consist. And the truth is, there are very few in the Scripture concerning whom more evidences are given of their being reprobates. And this should warn all men not to trust unto the outward privileges of the church. He was the first-

born of Isaac, circumcised according to the law of that ordinance, and partaker in all the worship of God in that holy family; yet an outcast from the covenant of grace and the promise thereof.

4. The way whereby he exerted and manifested his profaneness is declared: "Who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright."

Many expositors, in the consideration of the sin of Esau, as it is recorded, Gen. 25:29–34, reflect on many crimes in him, especially intemperance and gluttony; as far as I can see, without cause. His desire of food from his own brother, when he was hungry and faint, might be harmless. But he fell into his sin on the occasion that then fell out; which the apostle here reports as unto the matter of fact, and chargeth on profaneness. The matter of fact is known, and we must inquire wherein his profaneness acted itself. And it did so,—

(1.) In a readiness to part with his birthright, with whatsoever was contained in it and annexed unto it. Though I suppose he was then very young, for the story is added immediately after these words, "And the boys grew," verse 27; yet being bred in the family of Isaac, he could not but know what did belong to that birthright, and what was annexed unto it by divine institution. And whereas, as we shall see, this had something in it that was sacred, the undervaluing it was a high profaneness; we must inquire hereon, what this birthright was, and how he sold it, and wherein he manifested himself to be profane thereby.

Τὰ πρωτοτόκια αὐτοῦ He sold τὰ πρωτοτόκια αὐτοῦ, "suum jus primogeniti," Bez.; "his right of the first-born," "Jus primogeniturae suae," "the right of his own primogeniture;" the things belonging unto him as the first-born.

It is evident in the Scripture, that there were many rights and privileges of primogeniture in the church; some of them arising from the light of nature, and so common amongst all mankind; and some of them of divine institution.

Among these, the Jews, many of them, do reckon the priesthood; and they are followed herein by most of our expositors. But I am much mistaken if, by "the priesthood of the first-born," the Jews intend any thing but their dedication unto God by virtue of the law of the sanctification of every male that opened the womb, Exod. 13:2, 22:29, 34:19: whence they were changed for the Levites, who were taken into the sacred office, Num. 8:16–18. The priesthood, therefore, being settled in that tribe, which God took in exchange for the first-born, who were dedicated by the law of opening the womb, they called their state a priesthood. But it doth not appear that there was any ordinary office of

the priesthood until the institution of that of Aaron, to be typical of the priesthood of Christ; only there was one person before extraordinarily called unto that office, unto the same purpose, namely, Melchizedek. But the reader, if he please, may consult our Exercitations on the Priesthood of Christ, prefixed unto the second volume of this Exposition, where these things are handled at large, Exerc. xxv.–xxxiv., I shall not therefore admit this among the privileges of the birthright, and can give arguments sufficient to disprove it. But this is not a place to insist on these things.

A double portion of the paternal inheritance was ascertained unto the first-born by the law, Deut. 21:17. And this was but the determination of the light of nature unto a certain measure; for a natural reason is given for it: "He is the beginning of his strength: the right of the first-born is his." So when Reuben forfeited his birthright, the double portion was given unto Joseph and his sons, 1 Chron. 5:1. This right, therefore, was certainly sold, what lay in him, by Esau.

There was also in it a right of rule and government, over the rest of the children of the family; which was transferred to Judah on the forfeiture made by Reuben, 1 Chron. 5:2. And therefore when Isaac had transferred the birthright and blessing unto Jacob, he tells Esau, "I have made him thy lord, and all his brethren have I given to him for servants," Gen. 27:37.

These things did ordinarily, yea constantly, belong unto the first-born. But moreover, there was a blessing that from Abraham ran in the patriarchal line, which was communicated from father unto son, containing an enclosure of all church privileges, and the preservation of the promised Seed. This, I confess, was distinct from the birthright, and so it was distinguished by Esau, who in his complaint of his brother, cried out, "He hath supplanted me these two times: he took away my birthright; and, behold, now he hath taken away my blessing," Gen. 27:36. But although it was not annexed inseparably unto the birthright, yet there was a just expectation that it should be conveyed according to the primogeniture. Hence not only Esau calls it his blessing, "He hath taken away my blessing," verse 36, but Isaac calls it so too, "He hath taken away thy blessing," verse 35. It was not his by divine destination, as appeared in the issue; nor had he made it his by obtaining an especial interest in the promise by faith, for he had it not; but in the ordinary course it was to be his, and in the purpose of his father it was his, and so in his own expectation: but God cut off the line of succession herein, and gave it unto Jacob.

Now, as Jacob, in his whole design, aimed not at personal riches and power, wherein he was contented to see his brother far exceed him, as he did; but at an inheritance of the patriarchal blessing, wherein the promised Seed and the church-state were contained, whereinto the birthright was an outward entrance, a sign and pledge of it: so Esau, by selling his birthright, did virtually renounce his right unto the blessing, which he thought annexed thereunto.

Ἀπέδοτο. (2.) But it may be inquired how he sold this birthright, or how he could sell that which was not in his own power. The word is ἀπέδοτο, "he gave away," or "he gave up;" but whereas he did it on a price which he esteemed a valuable consideration for it, and did make an express bargain about it, the sense intended in the word is, that he sold it, as it is expressed, Gen. 25:33.

He could not by any contract change the course of nature, that he who was the first-born should really not be so; but it was his right by virtue thereof that he parted withal. Now, although this was not absolute, or immediately vested in him, seeing the father, yet living, might on just causes disinherit the first-born, as Jacob did Reuben; yet he had a right unto it, "jus ad rem," and an assured interest in it, as unto his father's affections. This he renounced; and hereby also he virtually parted with the blessing. But this he directly apprehended not. Wherefore although he never sought the recovery of the birthright, whose renunciation he had confirmed with an oath, yet he hoped that he might retain the blessing still.

Ος ἀντὶ βρώσεως μιᾶς (3.) It is evident how in all this action he carried it profanely. For, [1.] He discovered an easiness and readiness to part with his birthright, and all that was annexed thereunto by divine institution. Had he placed his principal interest therein, had he considered aright the privilege of it, had he by faith entertained the promise that went along with it, he would not have been so facile, nor so easily surprised into a renouncing of it. But being a man given wholly to his pleasures, and the love of present things, he seems scarce ever to have entertained serious thoughts about what it was significant of, in things spiritual and heavenly. [2.] In that he did it on so slight an occasion, and valued it at so small a rate as one "mess of pottage," or one "morsel of meat;" that is, of what was to be eaten. [3.] In that, without further deliberation, he confirmed the sale with a solemn oath; whereby he discovered the highest contempt of what he had parted withal. [4.] In his regardlessness of what he had done, after the power of his present temptation was over: for it is said, "He did

eat and drink, and rose up and went his way," as a man utterly unconcerned in what he had done; whereon the Holy Ghost adds this censure, "Thus Esau despised his birthright." He did not only sell it, but despised it, Gen. 25:31–34.

This was the profaneness of Esau. And we may observe, that,—

Obs. III. Evil examples proposed in Scripture-light, divested of all colours and pretences, laid open in their roots and causes, are efficacious warnings unto believers to abstain from all occasions leading unto the like evils, and much more from the evils themselves.—To this end is the sin of Esau here called over.

Obs. IV. Where there is in any a latent predominant principle of profaneness, a sudden temptation or trial will let it out unto the greatest evils, as it was with Esau; and we see it daily verified to amazement.

Obs. V. This principle of profaneness, in preferring the morsels of this world before the birthright privileges of the church, is that which at this day threatens the present ruin of religion.—What is it that makes so many forsake their profession in a time of trial or persecution? It is because they will not be hungry for the gospel; they will have their morsels, which they prefer before the truth and privileges thereof. What makes the profession of religion in some nations to totter at this day? Is it not because of the morsels of outward peace, with, it may be, dignities and preferments that lie on the other side, and some present hunger or supposed want of earthly things, that they may fall into? Let men pretend what they please, it is from a spirit of profaneness that they forsake the privileges and assemblies of the church for any outward advantage; and what will be their success, we shall see in the next verse.

Ver. 17.—"For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place for repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears."

Γάρ. 1. The efficacy of the example proposed consists in the due consideration of the consequent of the sin exemplified. 'Such was the sin of Esau, which ye ought to watch against in yourselves and others; for ye know what ensued thereon.' This the particle, "for," declares to be the reason of the following account of it.

Ἴστε. 2. The way is expressed whereby they understood this consequent of Esau's sin: "Ye know." They knew it from the Scripture, where it is recorded. He supposeth them acquainted with the Scriptures, and what is contained in them; as they were; in like manner as he says of Timothy, 2 Tim. 3:15; as it is the duty of all Christians to be. Besides, there is a peculiar force of persuasion and

conviction, when we argue from men's own knowledge and concessions. 'Ye know this yourselves; ye know it full well from the Scripture, and therefore let it be of great weight and consideration with you.'

3. The general force of the exhortation from the consideration of the event of Esau's profaneness, is taken from the surprisal that befell him when he found what his sin had brought him unto. For he is represented as a man under great amazement, as if he had little thought to fall into such a condition. And thus at one time or another it will befall all profane persons, who have refused the mercy and privileges of the gospel; they shall at one time or other fall under dreadful surprisals, in life, or at death, or at the last day. Then shall they see the horror of those crimes which before they made nothing of. Wherefore the Hebrews are here warned, and all professors of the gospel with them, that they decline not from their profession, lest they fall into the like surprisals, when it is too late to seek for deliverance out of them.

4. What he did upon this surprisal, with the effects of it, are declared,—

Μετέπειτα. (1.) The time wherein he did it is noted; it was "afterward." This afterward was not less, perhaps, than forty or fifty years. For he sold his birthright when he was young; now, when he designed the receiving of the blessing, Isaac was old, namely, about an hundred and forty years old, Gen. 27:2. So long did he live in his sin, without any sense of it or repentance for it. Things went prosperously with him in the world, and he had no regard in the least of what he had done, nor of what would be the end of it. But falling now into a new distress, it fills him with perplexity. And so it is with all secure sinners. Whilst things go prosperously with them, they can continue without remorse; but at one time or other their iniquity will find them out, Gen. 42:21, 22.

Θέλων κληρονομῆσαι τὴν εὐλογίαν. (2.) What he designed; and that was, to inherit the blessing: "He would have inherited the blessing." He esteemed himself the presumptive heir of the patriarchal blessing, and knew not that he had virtually renounced it, and meritoriously lost it, by selling his birthright. So the apostle here distinguisheth between the birthright and the blessing. He "sold his birthright," but "would have inherited the blessing;" esteemed it to belong unto him by right of inheritance, when he had himself destroyed that right. So he distinguished himself: "He took away my birthright; and, behold, now he hath taken away my blessing," Gen. 27:36. He had, no doubt, an apprehension that there were many excellent things contained in it; especially, a flourishing state and condition in this world, in a multiplication of posterity,

and power over enemies, which were express in the promise made unto Abraham, Gen. 22:17. This made him put in his claim for the blessing, without the least sense of the spiritual privileges of it; for he was a "profane person." And herein he was a type of the unbelieving Jews at that time; for they adhered to the outward things of the blessing, the carcass of it, unto the rejection of Him who was the whole life, soul, and power of it. And it is not unusual, that men should earnestly desire the outward privileges of the church, who value not the inward grace and power of them; but they are profane persons.

(3.) The event of this attempt was, that "he was rejected," "He was reprobated." So translators generally. Not that his eternal reprobation is hereby intended, (but this open, solemn rejection of him from the covenant of God, and the blessings thereof, was an evidence of his being reprobated of God, whence he is proposed as the type of reprobates, Rom. 9:11, 12), but the refusal of his father to give him the patriarchal blessing is that which is here intended.

(4.) There is his behaviour under this rejection, and the event thereof: "He sought it diligently with tears," but "he found no place of repentance." For that which the apostle intends fell out after his rejection, when his father had declared unto him that his blessing was gone for ever, Gen. 27:33–38. It is all one whether we refer αὐτήν, in the close of the verse, unto the remote antecedent, "the blessing," or unto the next, which is "repentance;" for that which he sought for in repentance, namely, the repentance of his father, or the change of his mind, was the blessing also. For it is now generally agreed by all, that there is nothing in the words which should in the least intimate that he sought of God the grace of repentance; nor is there any thing in the record that looks that way. And I shall rather interpret this word, with Beza, of the blessing, than of the repentance of Isaac; because his cry in the story was immediately and directly for the blessing.

Καὶπερ μετὰ δακρύων ἐκζητήσας. (5.) The manner how he sought the blessing, is, that "he did it diligently with tears." So the apostle expresseth the record, Gen. 27:38, "And Esau said unto his father, Hast thou but one blessing, my father? bless me, even me also, O my father. And Esau lifted up his voice and wept:" as those also of verse 34. No man, considering the intense affections that were between them, can express that conflict of nature which was on this occasion between Isaac and Esau. But in the one, grace and submission unto the will of God overcame all natural relutancy; in the other, resolution for further sin offered itself for relief,—"he said in his heart that he would slay his brother," verse 41. So it is in all like cases. Things that are most terrible and convulsive to

nature, in them that believe, are brought into order in due time by grace and resignation unto the will of God; and on the other hand, sin, with its deceitful contrivances, will not cease to offer its reliefs unto unbelievers in distress, until all hopes are cut off and vanished for ever.

But because here is an appearance of somewhat more than ordinary severity, in the peremptory denial of a divine blessing unto one who so earnestly sought and cried for it, the manner of his seeking it must be considered. And,—

[1.] He did it when it was too late. For he had not only forfeited his right unto it long before, and lived in impenitency under that forfeiture, but the sacred investiture of another in that blessing was solemnly past, which could not be recalled. So speaks Isaac even under his surprisal: "I have blessed him; yea, and he shall be blessed," Gen. 27:33.

Whatever men may pretend, whatever presumptuous sinners may flatter themselves withal, there is a limited time of the dispensation of grace, beyond which men shall not be admitted unto a participation of it, nor shall ever use the right way of attaining it. And this they may do well to consider who spend their lives in continual procrastination of their conversion to God. They may live, yet their time may be past, and a caveat entered against them, that they shall never enter into God's rest. See chap. 3:11–15, with the exposition.

[2.] He sought it not at all in a due manner. Outward vehemency in expressions, and tears, may be influenced by such considerations as not to be an evidence of inward sincerity. He sought it not of God, but only of him that was the minister of it. And according to the law of God's institution, the ministers of gospel blessings may be limited from a communication of them; but there is no law or bounds put unto the infinite treasures of divine goodness, if application be made thereunto in a due manner. But he sought the end without the means: he would have the blessing, but he used not the means for the attaining of it; namely, faith and repentance. For notwithstanding all his sorrow and trouble upon his disappointment, he entertained no thought about any repentance in himself; for he immediately fell into a resolution to follow Cain in his rejection, and to kill his brother.

Yet herein lies the great folly that the generality of men are betrayed into through the deceitfulness of sin, namely, that they would have the end, the blessing of mercy and glory, without the use of the means, in faith, repentance,

and obedience. But it is in vain to desire or endeavour a separation of those things which God, by an immutable constitution, hath conjoined and put together.

Μετανοίας γὰρ τόπον οὐχ εὗρε. Lastly, The reason of this event is expressed: "He found no place for repentance." That is, notwithstanding his pretended right, his claim of it, his earnestness with tears about it; notwithstanding the inexpressible affection of Isaac unto him, and his trembling surprisal at an apprehension that he had missed the blessing; yet Isaac did not, could not, might not, change his mind, or repent him of what he had done, in conferring the blessing on Jacob, which God approved of. This sad event had the profaneness of Esau. And we may observe,—

Obs. I. This example of Esau cuts off all hopes by outward privileges, where there is an inward profaneness of heart.—He had as much to plead for the blessing, and as fair a probability for the attaining it, as ever any profane hypocrite can have in this world. And,—

Obs. II. Profane apostates have a limited season only, wherein the recovery of the blessing is possible. For although here be no intimation of a man's seeking of repentance from God in a due manner, and being rejected,—which is contrary to the nature of God, who is a rewarder of all that diligently seek him, —yet there is an indication of severity, in leaving men in an irrecoverable condition, even in this life, who are guilty of such provocations.

Obs. III. The severity of God in dealing with apostates is a blessed ordinance for the preservation of them that believe, and the edification of the whole church, Rom. 11:22.

Obs. IV. Sin may be the occasion of great sorrow, where there is no sorrow for sin; as it was with Esau.—Men may rue that in the consequents, which yet they like well enough in the causes.

Obs. V. No man knows whereunto a deliberate sin may lead him, nor what will be the event of it. Esau little thought, when he sold his birthright, that he had utterly forfeited the eternal blessing.

Obs. VI. Profaneness and despising spiritual privileges, is a sin that God at one time or other will testify his severity against; yea this, on many accounts, is the proper object of God's severity. It shall not be spared in the eldest son and most dearly beloved of an Isaac.

Obs. VII. Steadfastness in faith, with submission unto the will of God, will establish the soul in those duties which are most irksome unto flesh and blood. —Nothing could prevail with Isaac to change his mind, when he knew what was the will of God.

Hebrews 12: 18–29

The discourse from hence unto the end of the chapter is of great weight, and accompanied with sundry difficulties, of which expositors do scarcely so much as take notice. Hence many different interpretations are given concerning the design of the apostle, and the principal things intended in the words. And because on the whole it gives the best rule and guidance for its own interpretation, in all the particulars of it, I shall premise those general considerations which will direct us in its exposition, taken from the scope of the words and nature of the argument in hand; as,—

1. The whole epistle, as we have often observed, is, as unto the kind of writing, parenetical. The design of the apostle in it, is to persuade and prevail with the Hebrews unto constancy and perseverance in the profession of the gospel. For herein they seem at this time to have been greatly shaken. To this end he considers the means and causes of such backslidings as he warned them against. And these may be referred unto four heads: (1.) An evil heart of unbelief, or the sin that doth easily beset them; (2.) An opinion of the excellency and necessity of Mosaical worship and the old church-state; (3.) Afflictions and persecutions for the gospel; (4.) Prevalent lusts and sins, such as profaneness, fornication, and the like: all which we have spoken unto in their respective places. Hereunto he adds a prescription of that universal obedience, and those especial duties of holiness, which their profession required, and which were necessary to the preservation of it.

2. The main argument which he insists on in general unto this end, and wherein the didactical part of the epistle doth consist, is the excellency, glory, and advantage, of that gospel-state whereunto they were called. This he proves from the person and office of its Author, his priesthood and sacrifice, with the spiritual worship and privileges belonging thereunto. All these he compareth with things of the same name and place under the law, demonstrating the excellency of the one above the other; and that especially on this account, that all the ordinances and institutions of the law were nothing but prefigurations of what was for to come.

3. Having insisted particularly and distinctly on all these things, and brought his especial arguments from them unto an issue, he makes in the discourse before us a recapitulation of the whole: for he makes a brief scheme of the two states that he had compared, balanceth them one against the other, and thereby demonstrates the force of his argument and exhortation from thence unto constancy and perseverance in the faith of the gospel. It is not therefore a new argument that here he proceeds unto; it is not an especial confirmation of his dehortation from profaneness, by the example of Esau, that he doth design: but as chap. 8:1, he gives us the κεφαλαιον, the "head" or sum of the things which he had discoursed concerning the priesthood of Christ; so here we have an ἀνακεφαλαίωσις, or "recapitulation" of what he had proved concerning the two states of the law and the gospel.

4. This summary way of arguing he had before touched on in his passage, as chap. 2:2, 3, 3:1–3, etc., 4:1. And he had more distinctly handled the antithesis in it on an alike occasion, Gal. 4:21–28. But here he makes use of it as a close unto his whole disputation, adding nothing unto it but a prescription of particular duties.

5. It must be observed, that the great honour and privilege of the Judaical church-state, whereon all particular advantages did depend, was their coming unto and station at mount Sinai, at the giving of the law. There were they taken into covenant with God, to be his peculiar people above all the world; there were they formed into a national church; there had they all the privileges of divine worship committed unto them. Hereon theirs was "the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises," as the apostle speaks, Rom. 9:4. This is that glory which they boast of unto this day, and whereon they rely in their unbelief and rejection of the gospel.

6. Wherefore the apostle, allowing all this communication of privileges unto them at Sinai, observes, that it was done in such a way of dread and terror as that sundry things are manifest therein; as, (1.) That there was no evidence, in all that was done, of God's being reconciled unto them, in and by those things. The whole representation of him was as an absolute sovereign and a severe judge. Nothing declared him as a father, gracious and merciful. (2.) There was no intimation of any condescension from the exact severity of what was required in the law; or of any relief or pardon in case of transgression. (3.) There was no promise of grace, in a way of aid or assistance, for the performance of what was required. Thunders, voices, earthquakes, and fire, gave no signification

of these things. (4.) The whole was hereby nothing but a glorious ministration of death and condemnation, as the apostle speaks, 2 Cor. 3:7; whence the consciences of sinners were forced to subscribe to their own condemnation as just and equal. (5.) God was here represented in all the outward demonstrations of infinite holiness, justice, severity, and terrible majesty, on the one hand; and on the other, men in their lowest condition of sin, misery, guilt, and death. If there be not, therefore, something else to interpose between God and men, somewhat to fill up the space between infinite severity and inexpressible guilt, all this glorious preparation was nothing but a theatre, set up for the pronouncing of judgment and the sentence of eternal condemnation against sinners. And on this consideration depends the force of the apostle's argument: and the due apprehension and declaration of it are a better exposition of verses 18–21 than the opening of the particular expressions will amount unto; yet they also must be explained.

7. It is hence evident, that the Israelites, in the station of Sinai, did bear the persons of convinced sinners under the sentence of the law. There might be many of them justified in their own persons by faith in the promise, but as they stood and heard and received the law, they represented sinners under the sentence of it, not yet relieved by the gospel. And this we may have respect unto in our exposition, as that which is the final intention of the apostle to declare, as is manifest from the description which he gives us of the gospel-state, and of those that are interested therein.

These things are necessary to be premised, unto a right understanding of the design of the apostle in the representation he gives us of the original of the old church-state. And one thing must be observed concerning his description of the gospel-state, which doth ensue. And this is,—

8. That all spiritual things of grace and glory, in heaven and earth, being recapitulated in Christ, as is declared Eph. 1:10, all brought unto a head and all centring in him, our coming unto him by faith gives us an interest in them all; so as that we may be said to come unto them all and every one, as it is here expressed. There is not required a peculiar acting or exercise of faith distinctly in reference unto every one of them; but by our coming unto Christ we come unto them all, as if every one of them had been the especial object of our faith, in our initiation into the gospel-state. Hence is the method or order in their expression; he and his mediation being mentioned in the close of the enumeration of the other privileges, as that upon the account whereof we are interested in them all, or as the reason of our so being.

9. The remainder of this discourse consists of two things:—

(1.) The enforcement of the exhortation from the balancing of these states, and comparing them together. And this falls under a double consideration: [1.] Of the things themselves on the part of the gospel: and this is from the eternal sanction of it, namely, the certain, infallible salvation of them that do believe, and the no less certain destruction of unbelievers and apostates. [2.] Of the comparison itself between the two states, which confirms that part of the exhortation which is taken from the certain destruction of unbelievers, by evidencing the aggravation of their sin above theirs who despised the law, verse 25.

(2.) He issues and closeth the whole argumentative part of the epistle, here summarily represented, with a declaration of the end and issue of the two states which he had so compared; namely, that one of them was speedily to be removed and taken out of the way, and the other to be established for ever, verses 26, 27. And hereon he closeth the whole with a direction how to behave ourselves in the evangelical worship of God, in the consideration of his glorious majesty and holiness, both in giving the law and the gospel.

A due attendance unto these rules will guide us in the exposition of this whole context.

Ver. 18, 19.—Οὐ γὰρ προσεληλύθατε ψηλαφωμένῳ ὄρει, καὶ κεκαυμένῳ πυρὶ, καὶ γνόφῳ, καὶ σκότῳ, καὶ θυέλλῃ, καὶ σάλπιγγος ἤχῳ, καὶ φωνῇ ῥημάτων, ἧς οἱ ἀκούσαντες παρητήσαντο μὴ προστεθῆναι αὐτοῖς λόγον.

Προσεληλύθατε. Προσέρχομαι is the word constantly used by our apostle to express a sacred access, or coming unto God in his worship. See chap. 10:1.

Ψηλαφωμένῳ ὄρει. Ὄρει, "the mountain," is not in the Syriac translation, nor the Arabic; but they retain, "which may be touched," referring it to the fire, "to the fire which burned, and might be touched." But the failure is evident; for that of touching relates unto the order about the mount, and not to the fire, which would also be improper. Vulg., "ad tractabilem montem;" Rhem., "a palpable mount;" improperly. Bez., "contrectabilem." "Tactus sensui expositum."

Κεκαυμένῳ πυρί. Vulg., "accessibilem ignem;" Rhem., "an accessible fire:" probably "accensibilem" was intended, whence the Rhemists put "kindled or burning" in the margin; for the fire was inaccessible. Bez., "et ardentem ignem." "Ignem incensum." Some refer κεκαυμένῳ to ὄρει, as we do, "the mount that burned;" some join it with πυρί, "the fire that burned," which I rather choose.

Καὶ σαλπιγγος ἤχω. Syr., לְקָלָא דְּקִיְנָא, "to the voice of the horn;" alluding to the rams' horns whereof they made a kind of trumpets.

Ver. 18, 19.—For ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, [or the fire that burned,] nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest, and the sound of the trumpet, and the voice of words, which [voice] they that heard entreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more.

The general scope of the words must be first opened, and then the particular expressions contained in them.

The principal design in hand is a description of that evangelical state whereinto the Hebrews were called, which they were come and entered into; for from thence the apostle infers his ensuing exhortation. But this their coming he expresseth negatively, to introduce a description of the church-state under the old testament, and the manner of the people's entrance into it; whence he confirms both his argument and his exhortation: "Ye are not come," And two things are included in that negative expression: 1. What their fathers did. They came, as we shall see, unto the things here mentioned. 2. What they were delivered from by their call unto the gospel. They were no more concerned in all that dread and terror. And the consideration of this deliverance was to be of moment with them, with respect unto their perseverance in the faith of the gospel; for this is the fundamental privilege which we receive thereby, namely, a deliverance from the terror and curse of the law. And we may observe some few general things, in this proposal of the way of the people's approach unto God at Sinai, before we open the several passages contained in the words; as,—

1. The apostle in this comparison, between their coming of old into the legal church-state, and our admission into the state of the gospel, includes a supposition of the way and manner whereby they approached unto God in the giving of the law. This was by the sanctification of themselves, the washing of their clothes, (as an outward sign thereof,) with other reverential preparations, Exod. 19:10, 11. Whence it will follow, that, the gospel church-state being so much more excellent than that of old, God himself being in it in a more glorious and excellent manner, we ought to endeavour a more eminent sanctification and preparation, in all our approaches unto God therein. And therefore he closeth his discourse with an exhortation thereunto: "Let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear," verse 28. This therefore he teacheth us in the whole, namely, that the grace,

love, and mercy of God, in the dispensation of the gospel, requires an internal sanctification and due preparation, with holy fear and reverence, in all our approaches unto him in his worship; answerable unto the type of it in the people's preparation for the receiving of the law, and the fear that was wrought in them by the terror of God therein. Our fear is of another kind than theirs was; yet ought it to be no less real and effectual in us, unto its proper end.

2. As unto the appearance of the divine Majesty here declared, we may observe, that all such apparitions were still suited unto the subject-matter, or what was to be declared of the mind of God in them. So he appeared unto Abraham in the shape of a man, Gen. 18:1, 2; because he came to give the promise of the blessing Seed, and to give a representation of the future incarnation. In the like shape he appeared unto Jacob, Gen. 32:24; which was also a representation of the Son of God as incarnate, blessing the church. Unto Moses he appeared as a fire in a bush which was not consumed, Exod. 3:2–6; because he would let him know that the fire of affliction in the church should not consume it, because of his presence in it. "He dwelt in the bush." Unto Joshua he appeared as an armed man, with his sword drawn in his hand, Josh. 5:13; to assure him of victory over all his enemies. But here he appears encompassed with all the dread and terror described; and this was to represent the holiness and severity of the law, with the inevitable and dreadful destruction of sinners who betake not themselves unto the promise for relief.

3. These appearances of God were the glory of the old testament, the great fundamental security of the faith of believers, the most eminent privilege of the church. Yet were they all but types and obscure resemblances of that which was granted in the foundation of the gospel church-state: and this was, that "God was manifest in the flesh;" "the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us;" or the incarnation of the Son of God. For therein "the fulness of the Godhead dwelt in him bodily," Col. 2:9; that is, really and substantially, whereof all other appearances were but shadows.

4. We may also observe some things in general concerning this appearance of the divine Majesty, which intimate the glory and terror of it; as, (1.) It was on the top of a high mountain, not in a plain. As this had a great appearance of the throne of majesty, so, it being above the people, as it were over them, it was meet to fill them with dread and fear. They looked up, and saw the mountain above them full of fire and smoke; the whole mount quaking greatly, thunders and terrible voices being heard in the air, Exod. 19:18, 20:18; Deut. 4:11. They could have no other thoughts hereon, but that it was a fearful thing to come to

judgment before this holy God. And one view of that terror of the Lord's holiness and severity, which were here represented, is enough to make the stoutest sinner to quake and tremble. (2.) To increase the reverence due to this appearance, the people were commanded their distance, and straitly forbidden an approach beyond the bounds fixed unto them. (3.) This prohibition was confirmed with a sanction, that every one who transgressed it should be stoned, as detestable and devoted unto utter destruction. These things, accompanied with the dreadful spectacles here mentioned by the apostle, did all lead to ingenerate an awful fear and reverence of God, in his giving of the law.

This was the way whereby those under the old testament entered into their church-state; which begot in them a spirit of bondage unto fear, during its continuance.

That expression, "They came," included in this, "Ye are not come," compriseth all the sacred preparation which, by God's direction, the people made use of when they approached unto the mount; concerning which the reader may see our Exercitations in the first volume of the Exposition, Exerc. xix.

There are two things in the remaining words: first, What the people so came unto; secondly, What effect it had upon them, especially as unto one instance. 1. The things that they came unto, as recorded by the apostle, are seven: (1.) The mount that might be touched. (2.) The fire that burned. (3.) Blackness. (4.) Darkness. (5.) Tempest. (6.) The sound of the trumpet. (7.) The voice of words. 2. The event was, that they entreated that the words might be spoken to them no more.

Ψηλαφωμένῳ ὄρει. FIRST, They came to, 1. "The mount that might be touched." This mount was Sinai, in the wilderness of Horeb, which was in the deserts of Arabia. So saith our apostle, "mount Sinai in Arabia," Gal. 4:25. And the apostle mentions this in the first place, because with respect unto this mountain all the laws and directions of the people's approach unto God were given, Exod. 19.

Of this mount it is said, "It might be touched." Ψηλαφάω is "to feel, to touch, to handle," Luke 24:39; 1 John 1:1; and it is sometimes applied to any means of attempting the knowledge of what we inquire after, Acts 17:27. And the apostle observes this concerning the mountain, that "it might be touched," felt, or handled,—that it was a sensible, carnal thing, exposed to the outward senses, to the most earthly of them, namely, feeling,—from the prohibition given, that

none should touch it: for unless it might have been touched naturally, none could have been morally prohibited to touch it. And he makes this observation for two ends: (1.) To manifest how low and inferior the giving of the law was, in comparison of the promulgation of the gospel, which was from heaven; as we shall see afterwards, verse 25. It was that which might be touched with the hands of men, or by beasts themselves. (2.) To intimate the bondage and fear the people were then in, who might not so much as touch the mountain where were the signs of God's presence, though it was in itself a thing exposed to the sense of all creatures.

And there is much of divine wisdom, that manifests itself in the choice of this place for the giving of the law. For, (1.) It was an absolute solitude, a place remote from the habitation and converse of men. Here the people could neither see nor hear any thing but God and themselves. There was no appearance of any relief, or place of retreat; but there they must abide the will of God. And this teacheth us, that when God deals with men by the law, he will let them see nothing but himself and their own consciences: he takes them out of their reliefs, reserves, and retreats. For the most part, when the law is preached unto sinners, they have innumerable diversions and reliefs at hand, to shield themselves from its terror and efficacy. The promises of sin itself are so, and so are the promises of future amendment; so also are all the businesses and occasions of life which they betake themselves unto. They have other things to do than to attend unto the voice of the law; at least it is not yet necessary that they should so do. But when God will bring them to the mount, as he will here or hereafter, all these pretences will vanish and disappear. Not one of them shall be able to suggest the least relief unto a poor guilty sinner. His conscience shall be kept to that which he can neither abide nor avoid. Unless he can make the great plea of an interest in the blood of Christ, he is gone for ever. And God gave herein a type and representation of the great judgment at the last day. The terror of it consists much in this, that sinners shall be able to see nothing but God and the tokens of his wrath. Nor doth the law represent any thing else unto us. (2.) It was a barren and fruitless desert, where there was neither water nor food. And, answerably thereunto, the law in a state of sin, would bring forth no fruit, nothing acceptable unto God nor useful unto the souls of men. For there was nothing on Sinai but bushes and brambles: whence it had its name. These made an appearance at a distance of some fruitfulness in the place; but when it came to be tried, there was nothing but what was fit for the fire. And so is it with all that are under the law. They may seem to perform many duties of

obedience, yea, such as they may trust unto, and make their boast of: but when they are brought unto the trial, they are no other but such as God speaks of, Isa. 27:4: "Who would set the briers and thorns against me in battle? I would go through them, I would burn them together." Other fruit the law will not bring forth. Nor was there any water in that desert of Horeb, to make it fruitful. That which the people lived on was brought out of the rock; and "that rock was Christ." From him alone are all refreshments to them that are under the law. (3.) No place in the habitable world hath been ever since more desolate and forsaken; and such it continueth unto this day.

And thereby we are taught, [1.] That although there was a necessity for the renovation of the law at that season, to give bounds unto sin, yet that that dispensation should not be continued, but be left for ever as it is under the gospel. [2.] That those who will abide under the law, shall never have any token of God's presence with them, but shall be left to desolation and horror. God dwells no more on Sinai. Those who abide under the law, shall neither have his presence nor any gracious pledge of it. And all those things are spoken, to stir us up to seek for an interest in that blessed gospel-state which is here proposed unto us. And thus much we have seen already, that without it there is neither relief from the curse of the law, nor acceptable fruit of obedience, nor pledge of divine favour, to be obtained. [3.] It manifests that the holiness of things and places is confined unto their use; which when it ceaseth, they become common. What more holy place than Sinai, during the presence of God on it? What now more desolate, forlorn, and despised? For although the superstition of latter ages hath built a house or monastery on the top of this hill, for a mere superstitious devotion, yet God in his providence hath sufficiently manifested his regardlessness of it, and the casting it out of his care. And he denounceth sentence herein on all that superstition and idolatry which are in the church of Rome, in their veneration of relics, and pilgrimages to places of a supposed holiness, though utterly forsaken of all pledges of the divine presence.

Καὶ κεκαυμένῳ πυρί. 2. The second thing they came unto was "the fire that burned;" for so I rather read the words, than "the mount that burned with fire." For the fire was of itself a distinct token of God's presence, and a distinct means of filling the people with dread and fear. This fire is mentioned, Exod. 19:18, "The LORD descended on the mount in fire;" and Deut. 4:12, "The LORD spake out of the midst of the fire." It is said, indeed, that "the mountain burned with fire;" that is, fire burned on the mountain. And this fire had a double appearance: (1.) That which represented the descent of God on the mount: "The

LORD descended in fire." The people saw the token of God's presence in the descent of fire on the mount. (2.) Of the continuance of his presence there, for it continued burning all the while God spake: "He spake out of the fire." And it was a flaming fire, which raised a smoke, like the smoke of a furnace, Exod. 19:18; which our apostle seems to express by "blackness," in the next word. Yea, this fire flamed, and "burned unto the midst of heaven," Deut. 4:11. This fire was an emblem of the presence of God; and of all the appearances on the mount, it was of the greatest terror unto the people. And therefore, in their request to be freed from the dread of the presence of God, they three times mention this fire as the cause of their fear, Deut. 5:24–26. And God is often in the Scripture represented by fire, Deut. 4:24; Isa. 30:33, 33:14. And his severity in the execution of his judgments is so called, Isa. 66:15; Amos 7:4; Ezek. 1:4. And although here the light, purity, and holiness of the nature of God, may also be represented by it, yet we shall confine it unto the interpretation given of it in the Scripture itself. And first, as unto God himself, it signified his jealousy. So Moses expounds it, Deut. 4:24, for he closeth his discourse hereof with these words, "For the LORD thy God is a consuming fire, even a jealous God." And the jealousy of God is his holy severity against sin, not to leave it unpunished. And with respect unto the law which he then gave,—"From his right hand went a fiery law for them," Deut. 33:2,—it signified its inexorable severity and efficacy to destroy its transgressors. And we may add hereunto, that it declared the terror of his majesty, as the great legislator. Hence in the Scripture he is often said to be accompanied with fire. See Ps. 18:9–12. Ps. 50:3, "A fire shall devour before him." Ps. 97:3, "A fire goeth before him." Dan. 7:10, "A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him." For there is nothing more apt to fill the hearts of men with a majestic awe than a fire absolutely prevalent above the power of all creatures.

This is the first thing which the people beheld when they came to the mount. And when men under the law have to deal with God, their first apprehensions of him are his holiness and severity against sinners, with his anger and displeasure against sin. There the law leaves them; and thence they must be consumed, without relief by Jesus Christ. These things are hid from sinners, until they are brought to the law, or the law to them. They have no views, no notices of them in a due manner. Hence, until the law comes, they are alive; that is, at peace and in security, well satisfied with their own condition. They see not, they think not of the fire, that is ready to consume them; yea, for the most part they have quite other notions of God, Ps. 50:21, or none at all. But

this is the second work of the law: when it hath by its convictions brought the sinner into a condition of a sense of guilt which he cannot avoid,—nor will any thing tender him relief, which way soever he looks, for he is in a desert,—it represents unto him the holiness and severity of God, with his indignation and wrath against sin; which have a resemblance of a consuming fire. This fills his heart with dread and terror, and makes him see his miserable, undone condition. Infinite holiness, inexorable justice, and fiery indignation, are all in this representation of God. Hence the cry of those who find not the way of relief will one day be, 'Who among us shall dwell with that devouring fire? Who shall inhabit with those everlasting burnings?'

This is the way and progress of the work of the law on the consciences of sinners: First, when they are brought unto it, "it stops their mouths," makes them "guilty before God," or subject to his judgment, Rom. 3:19; it "shuts them all up in unbelief," chap. 11:32; it "concludes," or shuts them up, "under sin," Gal. 3:22,—gives them to see their lost condition, without help, without relief. They are in a wilderness, where is none but God and themselves. And, secondly, in this condition they see the fire: God is represented unto them therein in his jealousy and severity against sin; which fills their hearts with dread and terror. O this fire will consume them! If they continue to hear the voice out of the fire, they shall die! Somewhat hereof, in some degree, is found in all on whom the law hath its proper and effectual work, in order unto the bringing of them unto Christ, the deliverer. And all others shall find it in the highest degree, when it will be too late to think of a remedy.

Καὶ γνόφῳ. 3. Unto "fire" the apostle adds "blackness," as we render the word; whereto follow "darkness and tempest." Before we speak unto the words and things signified in particular, we must consider the consistency of the things that are spoken. For, whereas fire is light in itself, and giveth light, how is it said that together with it there was blackness and darkness? Some distinguish the times, and say there was an appearance of fire at first, and afterwards of blackness and darkness. But this is directly contrary to the text, which frequently assigns the continuance of the fire unto the end of God's speaking unto the people. Others would have respect to be had unto several distinct parts of the mountain; so as that the fire appeared in one part, and the darkness in another. But it is evident, in the description given by Moses, that they were mingled all together. For he affirms sometimes, that God spake in and out of the fire; sometimes out of the thick darkness, Deut. 5:22–24. "The LORD spake unto all your assembly in the mount out of the midst of the fire, of the cloud,

and of the thick darkness," verse 22. "The voice out of the midst of the thick darkness," verse 23. "The voice out of the midst of the fire," verse 24. And the same is fully expressed, chap. 4:11, 12. So that it is evident there was a mixture of them all together; and so it is described by David, Ps. 18:8–13. And nothing can be conceived of greater dread and terror, than such a mixture of fire, and darkness, and tempest, which left nothing of light unto the fire but its dread and terror. For by reason of this blackness and darkness, the people had no useful light by the fire. This filled them with confusion and perplexity.

The word γνόφος, here used by the apostle, is intended by some "turbo;" Syr., הֹשׁוּכָא, "tenebrae," "darkness;" but that is σκότος, the word following. "Turbo" is a "storm or tempest." The apostle by these words expresseth those of Moses, חֹשֶׁךְ עָנָן וַעֲרָפֶל, Deut. 4:11, which we render, "darkness, clouds, and thick darkness;" the LXX. using the same words with the apostle, but not in the same order. Γνόφος, saith Eustathius, is from νέφος; νόφος, "a cloud," in the Aeolic dialect. Wherefore the apostle in this word might have respect unto that blackness which was caused by the thick cloud wherein God descended, Exod. 19:9, "Lo, I come unto thee in a thick cloud;" which cloud abode upon the mount, verse 16, the blackness of it being not taken away by the fire that was in it, every part of the appearance reserving its own terror. Or he might have respect unto the smoke caused by the fire, which was "as the smoke of a furnace," verse 18; for he doth not mention it in particular. But the Syriac and Arabic, with other translations, put the words in construction, and render them, "the blackness" or obscurity "of the cloud;" which probably is intended in this word and that following.

But this γνόφος, "blackness" or obscurity, had evidently three things in it: (1.) As it was mixed with fire, it increased the dread of the appearance. (2.) It hindered the people from clear views of the glory of God in this dispensation. With respect hereunto it is often said that "clouds and darkness are round about him," Ps. 97:2. (3.) It declared the dread of the sentence of the law, in fire and utter darkness.

And this is a third thing in the progress of the work of the law on the consciences of sinners: When they are shut up under guilt, and begin to be terrified with the representation of God's severity against sin, they cannot but look to see if there be any thing in the manifestation of God and his will by the law that will yield them relief. But here they find all things covered with blackness, or obscurity. The glory of God, in his design in bringing them unto

the law, or the law to them, is hid and covered under the veil of this blackness. The design of God herein is not death, though the law in itself be "the ministration of death;" but he deals thus with them to drive them to Christ, to constrain them to flee for refuge unto him. But this design, as unto the law, is covered with blackness; the sinner can see nothing of it, and so knows not how to order his speech towards God by reason of darkness, Job 37:19. It is the gospel alone that reveals this design of God in the law. But instead hereof, this blackness insinuates into the mind a dread of worse things than yet it can discern. When men see blackness in a cloud, they are apt to expect that thunder will break out of it every moment. So is it with sinners; finding all things covered with blackness, in the view they would take of God by the law, it increaseth their dread, and lets them into the things that follow. Wherefore,—

Obs. I. A view of God as a judge, represented in fire and blackness, will fill the souls of convinced sinners with dread and terror.—How secure soever they may be at present, when God calls them forth unto the mount their hearts cannot endure, nor can their hands be strong.

Καὶ σκότω. 4. Unto this "blackness" the apostle adds "darkness." Blackness is a property of a thing in itself; darkness is its effect towards others. This blackness was such as withal caused darkness, with respect unto them unto whom it was presented. So we may distinguish between the blackness and darkness of a thunder cloud. It is black in itself, and causeth darkness unto us. But this darkness is mentioned distinctly, as a part of the appearance: Exod. 20:21, "Moses drew near unto the thick darkness where God was;" and Deut. 4:11, "Darkness, clouds, and thick darkness." What this darkness was, we cannot well apprehend. But this it teacheth us, that notwithstanding the revelation that God made of himself in this dispensation of the law, he was, as unto his glory in the purposes of his grace and mercy, in thick darkness unto the people; they could not see him nor discern him. Sinners can see nothing thereof, in or by the law. How this darkness was removed by the ministry of Christ and the gospel, how this cloud of darkness was scattered, and the face of God as a father, as a reconciled God, uncovered, revealed, and made known, is the subject of the writings of the New Testament. Hence the execution of the law is called "blackness of darkness," Jude 13.

Καὶ θυέλλῃ. 5. Hereunto the apostle adds, "and tempest." And in this word he compriseth the thundering, lightning, and earthquake, that were then on and in the mount, Exod. 19:16, 18, 20:18. These increased the terror of the darkness, and made it עֲרָפֶל, "a thick darkness," as it is in Moses.

As it was without in the giving of the law, so it is within in the work of the law; it fills the minds of men with a storm, accompanied with darkness and perplexity. This is the issue that the law brings things unto in the minds and consciences of sinners. Its work ends in darkness and tempest. It hath these two effects: First, it brings the soul into darkness, that it knows not what to do, nor how to take one step towards its own relief. It can see no light, either for its direction or consolation. And hereon it either tires and wearies itself with vain endeavours for relief by its own works and duties, or else sinks into heartless despondencies and complaints; as is the manner of men in darkness. And secondly, it raiseth a tempest in the mind, of disquieting, perplexing thoughts; ofttimes accompanied with dread and terror. In this state the law leaves poor sinners; it will not accompany them one step towards deliverance; it will neither reveal nor encourage them to look after any relief. Yea, it declares that here the sinner must die and perish, for any thing that the law knows or can do. This, therefore, is the place and season wherein Christ interposeth, and cries unto sinners, "Behold me! behold me!"

Now, though all these things tend unto death, yet God was, and God is, exceedingly glorious in them. Yea, this administration of them was so. "The ministration of death" and condemnation "was glorious;" though "it had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth," namely, in the dispensation of the gospel, 2 Cor. 3:7, 10, 11. Howbeit in itself it did, and it doth, manifest the glory of the holiness, justice, and severity of God; wherein he will be glorified, and that unto eternity.

These things, with all their dreadful effects, the apostle minds the Hebrews of their deliverance from by Jesus Christ and his gospel, to oblige them unto constancy and perseverance in the profession of the faith; which we shall speak somewhat unto afterwards.

Καὶ σάλπιγγος ἤχω. Ver. 19.—6. They came to "the sound of the trumpet." This is called קוֹל שׁוֹפָר, "the voice of the trumpet," Exod. 19:16, 19; and was of great use in that solemnity. It is well rendered by the apostle, "the sound of a trumpet;" for it was not a real trumpet, but the sound of a trumpet, formed in the air by the ministry of angels, unto a degree of terror. So it "waxed louder and louder," to signify the nearer approach of God.

This sound of the trumpet, or an allusion unto it, is of great use in sacred things. Here it was used in the promulgation of the law. And there was under the law "a memorial of blowing of trumpets," on the first day of the seventh

month, to call the people unto the solemn day of expiation, Lev. 23:24; which was a type of preaching the gospel, and a declaration of the remission of sins by the atonement made in the sacrifice of Christ. But the principal solemnity hereof was in the proclamation of the jubilee, every fiftieth year, Lev. 25:7–9, when liberty was proclaimed throughout all the land, to all the inhabitants thereof, verse 10; which was fulfilled in the ministry of Christ, Isa. 61:1, 2. Whence the people were blessed that heard that joyful sound, Ps. 89:15. So it is frequently applied unto the promulgation of the gospel. It is also used as an indication of the entrance of divine judgments on the world, Rev. 8:6. And lastly, it is used as the means of summoning all flesh to judgment at the last day, 1 Cor. 15:52; 1 Thess. 4:16.

Here it had a treble use, and a double typical signification: (1.) It was to intimate the approach of God, to prepare the hearts of men with a due reverence of him. (2.) It was to summon the people to an appearance before him, as their lawgiver and judge; for on the sound of the trumpet, "Moses brought forth the people to meet with God; and they stood at the nether part of the mount." Exod. 19:17. (3.) It was the outward sign of the promulgation of the law, with the sanction of it; for immediately upon the sound of the trumpet God spake unto them. And as unto its typical signification, it was, (1.) A pledge of the future judgment, when all flesh shall be summoned before the judgment-seat of Christ, to answer the terms of the law. And, (2.) As it was changed in the following institution of the feast of expiation, and in the year of jubilee, it was, as was observed, a type of the promulgation of the gospel in the ministry of Christ himself. And,—

Obs. II. When God calls sinners to answer the law, there is no avoiding of an appearance; the terrible summons and citation will draw them out, whether they will or no.—In some the word is made effectual in this life, to bring them into the presence of God with fear and trembling; but here the whole matter is capable of a just composure in the blood of Christ, unto the glory of God and eternal salvation of the sinner. But those that here escape must answer for the whole, when the final summons shall be given them by the trumpet at the last day.

Obs. III. It is a blessed change, to be removed from the summons of the law to answer for the guilt of sin, unto the invitation of the gospel to come and accept of mercy and pardon.—He that shall compare this terrible citation of sinners before the throne of God, to receive and answer the law, with those

sweet, gracious, heavenly invitations, with proclamations of grace and mercy, given by Christ in the gospel, Matt. 11:28–30, may apprehend the difference of the two states here insisted on by the apostle.

And thus are things stated in the consciences of sinners, with respect unto the different sounds of the trumpet: The summons of the law fills them with dread and terror. Appear they must before God, there is no avoidance; but stand before him they cannot. They are like Adam, when he could no longer hide himself, but must appear and answer for his transgression. They have no refuge to betake themselves unto. The law condemns them; they condemn themselves; and God is represented as a judge full of severity. In this state, when mercy is designed for them, they begin to hear the voice of the trumpet for the promulgation of the gospel, and of grace and mercy by Jesus Christ. This "proclaims liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound," Isa. 61:1; that is, to such poor condemned creatures as they are. At first they are not able to believe it, it is so contrary to the summons which was given them by the law; but when it is made manifest unto them that the charge of the law is answered, and thereon mercy and peace are freely tendered unto them, it is as life from the dead, Hab. 2:1–4.

Under this dreadful summons of the law the gospel finds us; which exceedingly exalts the glory of the grace of God and of the blood of Christ, in the consciences of believers, as the apostle declares at large, Rom. 3:19–26.

Καί φωνῆ ῥημάτων. 7. Hereunto is added, "the voice of words." It is said that "God spake by a voice," Exod. 19:19; that is, an articulate voice, in the language of the people, that might be understood by all. Hence he is said to speak with the people, chap. 20:19. "The LORD spake unto them out of the midst of the fire," and "they heard the voice," Deut. 4:12, 5:23. Now, the words that were uttered with this voice were "the ten words," or "ten commandments," written afterwards in the two tables of stone, and no more. This the people all of them heard of the voice of God, and this only: Deut. 5:22, "These words the LORD spake unto all your assembly" (speaking of the ten commandments) "in the mount out of the midst of the fire, of the cloud, and of the thick darkness, with a great voice, and he added no more: and he wrote them in two tables of stone, and delivered them unto me,"—that is, afterwards.

Wherefore, from the midst of the dreadful appearance of fire, clouds, and darkness, all other noises of thunder and the trumpet ceasing, God caused a voice, speaking the words of the ten commandments articulately in their own

language, to be heard by the whole congregation, men, women, and children, in the station wherein they were placed at the foot of the mount. And this voice was so great and terrible as that the people were not able to bear it; for although it is evident that they were terrified with the dreadful appearances on the mount, yet was it this speaking of God himself that utterly overwhelmed them.

This law, for the substance of it, was written in the hearts of mankind by God himself in their original creation; but being much defaced, as to the efficacious notions of it by the entrance of sin and the corruption of our nature, and greatly affronted as unto the relics of it in the common practice of the world, God gave it in the church this becoming renovation with terror and majesty. And this he did, not only to renew it as a guide unto all righteousness and holiness, as the only rule and measure of obedience unto himself and of right and equity amongst men, and to give check, by its commands and sanction, unto sin; but principally to declare in the church the eternal establishment of it, that no change or alteration should be made in its commands or penalties, but that all must be fulfilled to the uttermost, or sinners would have no acceptance with God: for it being the original rule of obedience between him and mankind, and failing of its end through the entrance of sin, he would never have revived and proclaimed it, in this solemn, glorious manner, if it had been capable of any abrogation or alteration at any time. Therefore these words he spake himself immediately unto the people, and these only. His will concerning alterable institutions, he communicated by revelation unto Moses only. How this law is established and fulfilled, is declared in the gospel. See Rom. 10:1–4.

The unchangeable nature and sanction of this law, as unto its rewards and punishments, were eternally secured in the hearts and consciences of mankind; for it was so inlaid with the principles of our nature, so ingrafted on all the faculties of our souls, that no flesh is able utterly to subduct itself from under its power. Though sinners find it contrary unto them in all their desires and designs, and that which continually threatens their ruin, yet are they not able to cast off the yoke of it; as the apostle declares, Rom. 2:14, 15. But there are many additional evidences given hereunto, in this solemn renovation of it. For, (1.) It was for the promulgation of this law alone that there was all that dreadful preparation for the presence of God on mount Sinai. (2.) These were the first words that God spake unto the people; yea, (3.) The only words he spake. (4.) He spake them with a voice great and terrible; and, (5.) Wrote them with his own

finger on tables of stone. By all these ways did God confirm this law, and sufficiently manifest that it was liable neither to abrogation nor dissolution, but was to be answered and fulfilled to the utmost. And,—

Obs. IV. Let no man ever think or hope to appear before God with confidence or peace, unless he have an answer in readiness unto all the words of this law, all that it requires of us. And they who suppose they have any other answer, as their own works, merits, suffrages, and supererogations of others, masses, indulgences, and the like, any thing but the substitution of the Surety of the covenant in our stead, with an interest by faith in his mediation, blood, and sacrifice, will be eternally deceived.

SECONDLY, The last thing in this verse is the event of this sight and hearing on the part of the people. There was a voice of words; whereon it is said, "They that heard the voice entreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more." The story hereof is recorded, Exod. 20:19; Deut. 5:23–25.

Οἱ ἀκούσαντες. 1. Those spoken of are those that then heard that voice,—that is, the whole assembly or congregation; of all which, those that were above the age of twenty years, and so able to understand the matter and personally engage in the covenant, except two persons, died in the wilderness under the displeasure of God. So that,—

Obs. V. No outward privilege, such as this was, to hear the voice of God, is sufficient of itself to preserve men from such sins and rebellions as shall render them obnoxious unto divine displeasure.—For notwithstanding all the things that they had seen, all those signs and great miracles, "the LORD had not given them an heart to perceive, nor eyes to see, nor ears to hear," Deut. 29:2–4. In hearing they heard not, in seeing they perceived not; and did therefore "alway err in their heart," not knowing the ways of God, Heb. 3:10. For unto a right improvement of such outward privileges it is moreover required that God should "circumcise our hearts, to love the LORD our God with all our heart, and all our soul," Deut. 30:6, by the administration of efficacious grace.

Παρητήσαντο. 2. "They entreated that the word should not be spoken unto them any more;" or that the speech, namely, of God, should not be continued unto them immediately. The word here rendered by "entreated," we express by "refusing," verse 25. And in all other places it signifies to excuse one's self from doing any thing, Luke 14:18; "to refuse," Acts 25:11; "to decline, avoid and turn from," 1 Tim. 4:7, 5:11, 2 Tim. 2:23, Tit. 3:10. Wherefore such an entreaty is intended as included a declension and aversation of mind from what they spake

about. They deprecated the hearing of the word in that manner any more. And they did this, no doubt, by their officers and elders. For both themselves being terrified, and observing the dread of the whole congregation, they made request for themselves and the rest unto Moses. And because they did it with a good intention, out of a reverence of the majesty of God, without any design of declining obedience, it was accepted and approved of by God, Deut. 5:28, 29.

"They entreated that the word might not be added to them." Λόγος is both the speech and the thing spoken. And although they could not bear the latter either, as we shall see on the next verse, yet it is the former, the speech itself, or the immediate speaking of God himself unto them, which they did deprecate. So they express themselves, "If we hear the voice of the LORD our God any more, then we shall die," Deut. 5:25. This voice, this word, this speech, proceeding immediately from God, out of the fire and darkness, was that which heightened their fear and dread to the utmost. And we may see,—

Obs. VI. Then is the sinner utterly overwhelmed, when he hath a sense of the voice of God himself in the law.—When he finds God himself speaking in and unto his conscience, he can no longer bear it.

Obs. VII. That the speaking of the law doth immediately discover the invincible necessity of a mediator between God and sinners.—The people quickly found that there was no dealing with God for them in their own persons, and therefore desired that there might be one to mediate between God and them. And,—

Obs. VIII. If the giving of the law was so full of terror that the people could not bear it, but apprehended that they must die, if God continued to speak it to them; what will be the execution of its curse in a way of vengeance at the last day!

Ver. 20, 21.—(Οὐκ ἔφερον γὰρ τὸ διαστελλόμενον· Κἂν θηρίον θίγῃ τοῦ ὄρους, λιθοβοληθήσεται, ἢ βολίδι κατατοξευθήσεται. Καί, οὕτω φοβερὸν ἦν τὸ φανταζόμενον, Μωϋσῆς εἶπεν, Ἔκφοβός εἰμι καὶ ἔντρομος.)

Οὐκ ἔφερον. Vulg., "non portabant;" "they did not bear." "Non ferebant," Bez. Syr., לְאָ גַיִר מְשַׁכְּחִין חֲווּ לְמֶסַיְבְרוּ, "for they were not able to sustain," or "bear." We, "to endure."

Τὸ διαστελλόμενον. Vulg., "quod dicebatur," "that which was spoken." There is more in the word. Syr., "quod praecipiebatur;" "that was commanded, enjoined." "Edicebatur," "which was spoken out, enacted." Bez., "interdicebatur," "that was forbidden or interdicted," referring it unto the following words. We, "was commanded."

Ἢ βολίδι κατατοξευθήσεται. These words are omitted both in the Vulgar and in the Syriac and Arabic. But they are in all the best Greek copies; and they are necessary, as being a part of the original interdict. Nor is it absolutely true that such beasts should be stoned; for they were to be "stoned, or thrust through with a dart," Exod. 19:12, 13. These words, therefore, are necessary in this place. "Sagitta configetur."

Τὸ φανταζόμενον. Vulg., "quod videbatur," "that which was seen." Syr., חֶזְוָא, "the vision." Bez., "visum quod apparebat," "the sight that appeared." The sense of the whole sentence seems somewhat defective, for want of a note of connection between the parts of it: "And so terrible was the sight, Moses said, I exceedingly fear." We supply that; "that Moses said." Beza joins Moses immediately unto "and" in the beginning, putting a distinction between it and οὕτω, "so:" "Et Moses, adeò horrendum erat visum, dixit;"—"And Moses, so terrible was the sight, said:" which is the true construction of the words.

Ἔκφοβος, "exterritus," "expavefactus;" "I exceedingly fear," or "I am exceedingly afraid."

Ver. 20, 21.—For they could not endure [bear] that which was commanded. And if so much as a beast touch the mountain, it shall be stoned or thrust through with a dart. And so terrible [dreadful] was the sight [which appeared], [that] Moses said, I exceedingly fear and tremble.

The law about the beast is not distinct, as here proposed, but it is a part of the general prohibition: "Whosoever toucheth the mount shall be surely put to death," Exod. 19:12. This concerns the people only: but in the prescription of the manner of the death to be inflicted it is added, "There shall not an hand touch it, but he shall surely be stoned or shot through: whether it be beast or man, it shall not live," verse 13. Which manner of its introduction we respect in our translation, "If so much as a beast;" which was not at first named, but added in the repetition of the law. The word בְּהֵמָה signifies all sorts of cattle; which the apostle renders by θηρίον, to include those also which were of a wild nature. No living creature was allowed to come to the mount.

For the opening of the words, we must inquire, 1. What it was that was commanded. 2. How they could not endure it. 3. What further evidences there were that it was not to be endured by them; which are added unto the assertion laid down in the beginning of the 20th verse.

Τὸ διαστελλόμενον. First, "That which was commanded:" "The edict;" or as some, "the interdict." For it may relate unto that which follows, that which was commanded, namely, that "if so much as a beast touch the mountain, it should be stoned, or thrust through with a dart." Respect is had herein unto the whole charge given unto the people of not touching the mount or passing the bounds fixed unto them; wherein beasts also were included. And this, no doubt, was a great indication of severity, and might have occasioned danger unto the people, some or more of them. But this is not intended herein, nor hath this word respect unto what followeth, but unto what goeth before. For,—

Γάρ. 1. The note of connection, γάρ, "for," intimates that a reason is given in these words of what was asserted before: "They entreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more: for they could not endure that which was commanded."

2. The interdict of touching the mount was given three days before the fear and dread of the people, as is evident in the story: so as no respect could be had thereunto in what they said afterwards, when they were surprised with fear.

3. Though there was in it an intimation of the necessity of great reverence in their approach unto God, and of his severity in giving of the law, yet the people did not look on it as a matter of terror and dread, which they could not bear. For they came afterwards unto the bounds prescribed unto them, with confidence; nor did they begin to fear and tremble until the mount was all on fire, and they heard the voice of God out of the midst of it.

4. Even the words of Moses, repeated in the nest verse, were before the people had declared their dread and terror.

So that both these things are added only as aggravating circumstances of the insupportableness of what was commanded.

"That," therefore, "which was commanded," was nothing but the law itself.

Secondly, Hereof it is said, "They could not endure it," or, "They could not bear it," or stand under it. And there were three things that concurred to convince them of their disability to bear the command: 1. The manner of its delivery; which they had a principal respect unto in their fear, and desire that it might be spoken unto them no more. This is plain in the story, and so they

directly express themselves, Deut. 5:23–26. 2. It was from the nature of the law itself, or the word that was spoken, with respect unto its end. For it was given as a rule of justification, and of acceptance with God: and hereon, they might easily see how unable they were to bear it. 3. There was administered with it "a spirit of bondage unto fear," Rom. 8:15, which aggravated the terror of it in their consciences.

These are the effects which a due apprehension of the nature, end, and use of the law, with the severity of God therein, will produce in the minds and consciences of sinners. Thus far the law brings us; and here it leaves us. Here are we shut up. There is no exception to be put in unto the law itself; it evidenceth itself to be holy, just, and good. There is no avoidance of its power, sentence, and sanction; it is given by God himself. The sinner could wish that he might never hear more of it. What is past with him against this law cannot be answered for; what is to come cannot be complied withal: wherefore, without relief in Christ, here the sinner must perish for ever. This, I say, is the last effect of the law on the consciences of sinners: It brings them to a determinate judgment that they cannot bear that which is commanded. Hereon they find themselves utterly lost; and so have no expectation but of fiery indignation to consume them. And accordingly they must eternally perish, if they betake not themselves unto the only relief and remedy.

Thirdly, Of this terror from the giving of the law, and the causes of it, the apostle gives a double illustration.

Κἂν θηρίον θίγῃ. The first whereof is in the interdict given as unto the touching of the mount. For this was such as extended unto the very beasts: "Si vel bestia,"—"And if so much as a beast." For so was the divine constitution, "Whether it be beast or man, it shall not live," Exod. 19:13. I doubt not but that divine Providence removed from it such brute creatures as were not under the power of men, such as might be wild about those mountainous deserts, or the fire consumed them, to the least creeping thing; but the prohibition respects the cattle of the people, which were under their power and at their disposal. And besides being an illustration of the absolute inaccessibleness of God, in and by the law, it seems to intimate the uncleanness of all things which sinners possess, by their relation unto them. For unto the impure all things are impure and defiled. Therefore doth the prohibition extend itself unto the beasts also.

Λιθοβοληθήσεται, ἢ βολίδι κατατοξευθήσεται. The punishment of the beast that did touch the mount, was, that it should die. And the manner of its death (and so of men guilty in the like kind) was, that "it should be stoned, or thrust through with a dart." It is expressed in the prohibition, that no hand should touch that which had the offended. It was to be slain at a distance with stones or darts. The heinousness of the offence, with the execrableness of the offender, is declared thereby. No hand was ever more to touch it; either to relieve it (which may be the sense of the word), or to slay it, lest it should be defiled thereby. And it showeth also at what distance we ought to keep ourselves from every thing that falls under the curse of the law.

Ver. 21.—The second evidence which he gives of the dreadful promulgation of the law, and consequently of the miserable estate of them that are under its power, is in what befell Moses on this occasion. And we may consider, 1. The person in whom he giveth the instance. 2. The cause of the consternation ascribed unto him. 3. How he expressed it.

Καὶ Μωϋσῆς. 1. The person is Moses. The effect of this terror extended itself unto the meanest of beasts, and unto the best of men. Moses was, (1.) A person holy, and abounding in grace above all others of his time;—the meekest man on the earth. (2.) He was accustomed unto divine revelations, and had (3.) He was the internuncius, the messenger, the mediator between God and the people, at that time. Yet could none of these privileges exempt him from an amazing sense of the terror of the Lord in giving the law. And if with all these advantages he could not bear it, much less can any other man so do. The mediator himself of the old covenant was not able to sustain the dread and terror of the law: how desperate then are their hopes who would yet be saved by Moses!

Τὸ φανταζόμενον. 2. The cause of his consternation was the sight, it was "so terrible:" "Visum quod apparebat;"—that which appeared, and was represented unto him. And this takes in not only what was the object of the sight of his eyes, but that of his ears also, in voices, and thundering, and the sound of the trumpet. Οὕτω φοβερὸν ἦν. The whole of it was "terrible," or "dreadful." It was "so dreadful," unto such an incomprehensible degree.

3. His expression of the consternation that befell him hereon is in these words, "I exceedingly fear and tremble," He said so; we are assured of it by the Holy Ghost in this place. But the words themselves are not recorded in the story. They were undoubtedly spoken then and there, where, upon this dreadful

representation of God, it is said that he spake; but not one word is added of what he spake: Exod. 19:19, "And when the voice of the trumpet sounded long, and waxed louder and louder, Moses spake, and God answered him by a voice;" yet nothing is added, either of what Moses spake, or of what God answered. Then, no doubt, did he speak these words: for it was immediately upon his sight of the dreadful appearance; unto which season the apostle assigns them.

The expositors of the Roman church raise hence a great plea for unwritten traditions;—than which nothing can be more weak and vain. For, (1.) How do they know that the apostle had the knowledge hereof by tradition? Certain it is, that in the traditions that yet remain among the Jews there is no Mention of any such thing. All other things he had by immediate inspiration, as Moses wrote the story of things past. (2.) Had not these words been now recorded by the apostle, what had become of the tradition concerning them? would any man living have believed it? Let them give us a tradition of any thing spoken by Moses or the prophets, or by Christ himself, which is not recorded, with any probability of truth, and somewhat will be allowed to their traditions. Wherefore, (3.) The occasional divine record of such passages, ascertaining their verity, without which they would have been utterly lost, is sufficient to discover the vanity of their pretended traditions.

Moses spake these words in his own person, and not, as some—indeed the person of the people. He was really so affected as he expressed it. And it was the will of God that so he should be. He would have him also to be sensible of his terror in the giving of the law.

It is said that "God answered him with a voice;" but what he said unto him is not recorded. No doubt but God spake that which gave him relief, which delivered him out of his distress, and reduced him unto a frame of mind meet for the ministration committed unto him; which in his surprisal and consternation he was not. And therefore immediately afterwards, when the people fell into their great horror and distress, he was able to relieve and comfort them; no doubt with that kind of relief which he himself had received from God, Exod. 20:20. It appears, then, that,—

Obs. All persons concerned were brought unto an utter loss and distress, by the renovation and giving of the law; from whence no relief is to be obtained, but by Him alone who is "the end of the law for righteousness unto every one that believeth."

Ver. 22–24.—Ἀλλὰ προσεληλύθατε Σιὼν ὄρει, καὶ πόλει Θεοῦ ζῶντος, Ἰερουσαλὴμ ἐπουρανίῳ, καὶ μυριάσιν ἀγγέλων, πανηγύρει καὶ ἐκκλησία πρωτοτόκων ἐν οὐρανοῖς ἀπογεγραμμένων, καὶ κριτῇ Θεῷ πάντων, καὶ πνεύμασι δικαίων τετελειωμένων, καὶ διαθήκης νέας μεσίτῃ Ἰησοῦ, καὶ αἵματι ῥαντισμοῦ, κρείττονα λαλοῦντι παρὰ τὸν Ἄβελ.

The Vulgar Latin and the Syriac seem to have read μυριάδων instead of μυριάσιν; hence they join *πανηγύρει*, the word following, unto those foregoing, "unto the assembly of many thousands of angels;" but without warrant from any copies of the original.

Ver. 22–24.—But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, [namely,] the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company [myriads] of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written [enrolled] in heaven, and to God the judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, speaking better things than [that of] Abel.

This is the second part of the comparison, completing the foundation of the exhortation intended by the apostle. In the former he gave an account of the state of the people and the church under the law, from the giving of it, and the nature of its commands. In this, he so declares the state whereinto they were called by the gospel, as to manifest it incomparably more excellent in itself, and beneficial unto them. And because this whole context, and every thing in it, is peculiar and singular, we must with the more diligence insist on the exposition of it.

1. We have here a blessed, yea, a glorious description of the catholic church, as the nature and communion of it are revealed under the gospel. And such a description it is as which, if it were attended unto and believed, would not only silence all the contentious wrangling that the world is filled withal about that name and thing, but cast out also other prejudicate conceptions and opinions innumerable, which divide all Christians, fill them with mutual animosities, and ruin their peace. For if we have here the substance of all the privileges which we receive by the gospel; if we have an account of them, or who they are, who are partakers of those privileges, as also the only foundation of all that church-communion which is amongst them; the grounds of our perpetual strifes are quickly taken away. It is the access here ascribed unto believers, and that alone, which will secure their eternal salvation.

2. Whereas the catholic church is distributed into two parts, namely, that which is militant, and that which is triumphant, they are both comprehended in this description, with the respect of God and Christ unto them both. For the first expressions, as we shall see, of "mount Sion, the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem," do principally respect that part of the church which is militant; as those that follow, the most of them, do that which is triumphant. There is, in the religion of the Papists, another part of the church, neither on the earth nor in heaven, but under the earth, as they say,—in purgatory. But herewith they have nothing to do who come unto Christ by the gospel. They come indeed unto "the spirits of just men made perfect;" but so are none of those, by their own confession, who are in purgatory. Wherefore believers have nothing to do with them.

3. The foundation of this catholic communion, or communion of the catholic church, comprising all that is holy and dedicated unto God in heaven and earth, is laid in the recapitulation of all things in and by Jesus Christ; Eph. 1:10, "All things are gathered into one head in him, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth;" which is the sole foundation of their mutual communion among themselves. Whereas, therefore, we have here an association, in the communion of men and angels, and the souls of them that are departed, in a middle state between them both, we ought to consider always their recapitulation in Christ as the cause thereof. And whereas not only were all things so gathered into one by him, but "by him also God reconciled all things unto himself, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven," Col. 1:20, God himself is here represented as the supreme sovereign head of this catholic church, the whole of it being reconciled unto him.

4. The method which the apostle seems to observe, in this description of the church catholic in both the parts of it, is first to express that part of it which is militant, then that which is triumphant, issuing the whole in the relation of God and Christ thereunto; as we shall see in the exposition.

5. That which we must respect, as our rule in the exposition of the whole, is, that the apostle intends a description of that state whereunto believers are called by the gospel. For it is that alone which he opposeth to the state of the church under the old testament. And to suppose that it is the heavenly, future state which he intends, is utterly to destroy the force of his argument and exhortation; for they are built solely on the pre-eminence of the gospel-state above that under the law, and not of heaven itself, which none could question.

We must consider, then, 1. What believers are said to come unto; and, 2. How they do so come unto it, or wherein their coming unto it doth consist.

And FIRST we are said, 1. To come "unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem." The two last are not distinct expressions of diverse things, but different names of the same thing,—"the city of the living God," namely, "the new Jerusalem." Nor is it necessary that we should appropriate these two expressions of "Mount Sion," and "The city of the living God," unto distinct or different things in the gospel-state, but only consider them as different expressions of the same thing. The sum of the whole is, that by the gospel we are called unto a participation of all the glory which was ascribed or promised unto the church under these names, in opposition unto what the people received in and by the law at mount Sinai.

Σιὼν ὄρει. Sion was a mount in Jerusalem which had two heads, the one whereof was called Moriah, whereon the temple was built, whereby it became the seat of all the solemn worship of God; and on the other was the palace and habitation of the kings of the house of David; both of them typical of Christ, the one in his priestly the other in his kingly office.

The apostle doth not consider it naturally or materially, but in opposition unto mount Sinai, where the law was given. So he describeth the same opposition between the same Sinai and the heavenly Jerusalem, unto the same end, Gal. 4:25, 26; where it is apparent, that by "mount Sion" and "the heavenly Jerusalem," the same state of the church is intended.

And the opposition between these two mounts was eminent. For, (1.) God came down for a season only on mount Sinai; but in Sion he is said to dwell, and to make it his habitation for ever. (2.) He appeared in terror on mount Sinai, as we have seen; Sion was in Jerusalem, which is "a vision of peace." (3.) He gave the law on mount Sinai; the gospel went forth from Sion, Isa. 2:2, 3. (4.) He utterly forsook Sinai, and left it under bondage; but Sion is free for ever, Gal. 4. (5.) The people were burdened with the law at mount Sinai, and were led with it unto Sion, where they waited for deliverance from it, in the observation of those institutions of divine worship which were typical and significant thereof.

The Socinian expositor, who affects subtilty and curiosity, affirms, "That by mount Sion, either heaven itself, or rather a spiritual mountain, whose roots are on the earth, and whose top reacheth unto heaven, from whence we may easily enter into heaven itself, is intended:" wherein he understood nothing himself of what he wrote; for it is not sense, nor to be understood. And the reason he gives,

namely, "That Sion in the Scripture is more frequently taken for heaven than the church," is so far from truth, that he cannot give any one instance where it is so taken. But to know the true reason why the apostle calls the state of believers under the new testament by the name of Sion, we may consider some of the things that are spoken of Sion in the Scripture. And I shall instance in a few only, because they are multiplied throughout the whole Book of God; as, (1.) It is the place of God's habitation, where he dwells for ever, Ps. 9:11, 76:2; Joel 3:21, etc. (2.) It is the seat of the throne, reign, and kingdom of Christ, Ps. 2:6; Isa. 24:23; Mic. 4:7. (3.) It is the object of divine promises innumerable, Ps. 69:35, Isa. 1:27; of Christ himself, Isa. 59:20. (4.) Thence did the gospel proceed, and the law of Christ come forth, Isa. 40:9; Mic. 4:2. (5.) It was the object of God's especial love, and the place of the birth of the elect, Ps. 87:2, 5. (6.) The joy of the whole earth, Ps. 48:2. (7.) Salvation, and all blessings came forth out of Sion, Ps. 14:7, 110:2, 128:5; with sundry other things alike glorious. Now these things were not spoken of nor accomplished towards that mount Sion which was in Jerusalem absolutely, but only as it was typical of believers under believers do come unto that state wherein they have an interest in, and a right unto, all the blessed and glorious things that are spoken in the Scriptures concerning and unto Sion. All the privileges ascribed, all the promises made unto it, are theirs. Sion is the place of God's especial gracious residence, of the throne of Christ in his reign, the subject of all graces, the object of all promises, as the Scripture abundantly testifies.

This is the first privilege of believers under the gospel. They "come unto mount Sion;" that is, they are interested in all the promises of God made unto Sion, recorded in the Scripture, in all the love and care of God expressed towards it, in all the spiritual glories assigned unto it. The things spoken of it were never accomplished in the earthly Sion, but only typically; spiritually, and in their reality, they belong unto believers under the new testament.

Some look on all those promises and privileges wherewith the Scripture is replenished, with respect unto Sion, to be now as things dead and useless. They esteem it a presumption for any to plead and claim an interest in them, or to expect the accomplishment of them in or towards themselves. But this is expressly to contradict the apostle in this place, who affirms that we are come unto mount Sion, then when the earthly mount Sion was utterly forsaken. All those promises, therefore, which were made of old to Sion, do belong unto the present church of believers. These, in every condition, they may plead with God.

They have the grace, and shall have the comfort contained in them. There is the security and assurance of their safety, preservation, and eternal salvation. Thereon depends their final deliverance from all their oppressions.

Be their outward condition never so mean and destitute; be they afflicted, persecuted, and despised; yet all the glorious things that are spoken of Sion are theirs, and accomplished in them in the sight of God. But the excellent things whereof, under this notion of Sion, they are made partakers, are innumerable.

Let this be compared with the people's coming unto mount Sinai, as we have before declared it, and the glory of it will be conspicuous. And believers are to be admonished, (1.) To walk worthy of this privilege, as Ps. 15; (2.) To be thankful for it; (3.) To rejoice in it; (4.) To make it an effectual motive unto obedience and perseverance, as it is here done by the apostle. And,—

Obs. I. All pleas about church order, power, rights and privileges, are useless, where men are not interested in this Sion state.

2. They are said to come "unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem." Both these are the same. So Jerusalem is called "the city of God," Ps. 46:4, 48:1, 8, 87:3; but in every place with respect unto Sion.

Καὶ πόλει. (1.) They came to a city. They received the law in a wilderness, where they had neither rest nor refuge. But in a city there is order, defence, and safety; it is the name of a quiet habitation.

Θεοῦ. (2.) This was the city of God. The state of the church under the new testament is so. As it hath the safety, beauty, and order of a city, so it is the city of God; the only city which he takes peculiarly to be his own in this world. It is his, [1.] On the account of property. He framed it, he built it, it is his own; no creature can lay claim to it, or any part of it. And those who usurp upon it, shall answer unto him for their usurpation. [2.] On the account of inhabitation. It is God's city; for he dwells in it, and in it alone, by his gracious presence. [3.] It is under God's rule, as its only sovereign. [4.] Therein he disposeth all his children into a spiritual society. So Paul tells the Ephesians, that by grace they were delivered from being "strangers and foreigners," and made "fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God," Eph. 2:19. [5.] It hath its charter of liberty with all immunities and privileges, from God alone. And with respect unto these things, the church is called the city of God.

Ζῶντος. (3.) The apostle adds a property of God of great consideration in this matter. It is the city of the living God;—that is, [1.] Of the true and only God; [2.] Of him who is omnipotent, able to keep and preserve his own city, as having all life, and consequently all power, in himself; [3.] Of him who lives eternally, with whom we shall live when we shall be here no more.

Ἱερουσαλὴμ ἐπουρανίῳ. (4.) This city of the living God is the heavenly Jerusalem. And the apostle herein prefers the privileges of the gospel, not only above what the people were made partakers of at Sinai in the wilderness, but also above all that they afterwards enjoyed in Jerusalem in the land of Canaan: for in the glory and privileges of that city the Hebrews greatly boasted. But the apostle casts that city, in the state wherein it then was, into the same condition with mount Sinai in Arabia; that is, under bondage, as indeed then it was, Gal. 4:25: and he opposeth thereunto that "Jerusalem which is above;" that is, this "heavenly Jerusalem." And it is called "heavenly," [1.] Because, as unto all its concerns as a city, it is not of this world; [2.] Because no small part of its inhabitants are already actually instated in heaven; [3.] As unto its state on earth, it comes down from heaven, Rev. 21:2, 3,—that is, hath its original from divine authority and institution; [4.] Because the state, portion, and inheritance of all its inhabitants, lies in heaven; [5.] Because the spiritual life of all that belong unto it, and the graces which they act therein, are heavenly; [6.] Their πολίτευμα, or "city conversation," is in heaven, Phil. 3:20.

This is the second privilege of the gospel-state, wherein all the remaining promises of the Old Testament are transferred and made over to believers. Whatever is spoken of the city of God, or of Jerusalem, that is spiritual, that contains in it the love, or grace, or favour of God, it is all made theirs; faith can lay a claim unto it all. Believers are so come to this city, as to be inhabitants, free denizens, possessors of it; unto whom all the rights, privileges, and immunities of it do belong. And what is spoken of it in the Scripture is a ground of faith unto them, and a spring of consolation. For they may with confidence make application of what is so spoken unto themselves in every condition; and they do so accordingly. And we may yet a little further represent the glory of this privilege, in the ensuing observations:—

(1.) A city is the only place of rest, peace, safety, and honour, among men in this world. Unto all these, in the spiritual sense, we are brought by the gospel. Whilst men are under the law, they are at Sinai, in a wilderness where is none of these things. The souls of sinners can find no place of rest or safety under the

law. But we have all these things by the gospel: Rest in Christ, peace with God, order in the communion of faith, safety in divine protection, and honour in our relation unto God in Christ.

(2.) The greatest and most glorious city which is, or ever was in the world, is the city of this or that man, who hath power or dominion in it. So spake Nebuchadnezzar of his city, "Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty?" Dan. 4:30. We know what was the end of him and his city. The gospel-church is the city of the living God; and it is ten thousand times more glorious to be a citizen thereof, than of the greatest city in the world. To be a citizen of the city of God, is to be free, to be honourable, to be safe, to have a certain habitation, and a blessed inheritance.

(3.) God dwells in the church of believers. The great King inhabiteth his own city. Herein is the especial residence of his glory and majesty. He built it, framed it for himself, and says concerning it, "Here will I dwell, and this shall be my habitation for ever." And it is no small privilege, to dwell with God in his own city. The name of this city is "Jehovah-shammah,—The LORD is there," Ezek. 48:35.

(4.) The privileges of this city of God are heavenly; it is "the heavenly Jerusalem." Hence it is that the world sees them not, knows them not, values them not. They are above them, and their glory is imperceptible unto them.

(5.) All the powers of the world, in conjunction with those of hell, cannot dispossess believers of their interest and habitation in this heavenly city.

(6.) There is a spiritual order and beauty in the communion of the catholic church, such as becomes the city of the living God; and such as wherein the order framed by the constitutions of men hath no concernment.

And in many other things we might declare the glory of this privilege. And,

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Obs. II. It is our duty well to consider what sort of persons they ought to be who are meet to be denizens of this city of God.—The greater number of those who pretend highly unto the church and its privileges, are most unfit for this society. They are citizens of the world.

Καὶ μυριάσιν ἀγγέλων. 3. In the next place the apostle affirms, that believers are come to "an innumerable company of angels." For having declared that they are come to the city of God, he shows in the next place who are the inhabitants of that city besides themselves. And these he distributes into several sorts, as we

shall see, whereof the first is "angels." We are come to them as our fellow-citizens,—to "myriads of angels." Μυριάς is "ten thousand;" and when it is used in the plural number, it signifies "an innumerable company," as we here render it. Possibly he hath respect unto the angels that attended the presence of God in the giving of the law, whereof the psalmist says, "The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels: the Lord is among them, as in Sinai, in the holy place," Ps. 68:17; or the account of them given by Daniel, "Thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him," chap. 7:10,—that is, "an innumerable company."

This access unto angels is spiritual. The access of the people unto their ministry in Sinai was corporeal only, nor had they any communion with them thereby. But ours is spiritual, which needs no local access unto it. We come thereby unto them whilst we are on the earth and they in heaven. We do not so with our prayers; which is the doting superstition of the church of Rome, utterly destructive of the communion here asserted. For although there be a difference and distance between their persons and ours as to dignity and power, yet as unto this communion we are equal in it with them, as one of them directly declares; saying unto John, "Worship me not: I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus," Rev. 19:10, 22:9. Nothing can be more groundless, than that fellow-servants should worship one another. But we have an access unto them all; not to this or that tutelar angel, but unto the whole innumerable company of them. And this we have, (1.) By the recapitulation of them and us in Christ, Eph. 1:10. They and we are brought into one mystical body, whereof Christ is head; one family, which is in heaven and earth, called after his name, Eph. 3:14, 15. We are brought together into one society: the nature of which effect of infinite wisdom I have elsewhere declared. (2.) In that they and we are constantly engaged in the same worship of Jesus Christ. Hence they call themselves our "fellow-servants." This God hath given in command unto them, as well as unto us. For he saith, "Let all the angels of God worship him," Heb. 1:6; which they do accordingly, Rev. 5:11, 12. (3.) We have so on the account of the ministry committed unto them for the service of the church, Heb. 1:14. See the exposition of that place. (4.) In that the fear and dread of their ministry is now taken from us; which was so great under the old testament, that those unto whom they appeared thought they must die immediately. There is a perfect reconciliation between the church on the earth and the angels above; the distance and enmity that were between them and us by reason of sin are taken away, Col. 1:20. There is a oneness in design and a

communion in service between them and us: as we rejoice in their happiness and glory, so they seek ours continually; their ascription of praise and glory to God is mingled with the praises of the church, so as to compose an entire worship, Rev. 5:8–12.

Wherefore by Jesus Christ we have a blessed access unto this "innumerable company of angels." Those who, by reason of our fall from God, and the first entrance of sin, had no regard unto us, but to execute the vengeance of God against us, represented by the cherubim with the flaming sword, (for "he maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire,") to keep man, when he had sinned, out of Eden, and from the tree of life, Gen. 3:24; those whose ministry God made use of in giving of the law, to fill the people with dread and terror; they are now, in Christ, become one mystical body with the church, and our associates in design and service. And this may well be esteemed as an eminent privilege which we receive by the gospel. And if this be so, then,—

Obs. III. The church is the safest society in the world.—A kingdom it is, a city, a family, a house, which the power of hell and the world can never prevail against. Nor are these boasting words, in whatever distressed condition it may be in this world, but the faithful sayings of God. Our Lord Jesus Christ, the head of this society, when he was entering into his sufferings, to manifest that he did it by his own will and choice, and was not necessitated unto it by the power of men, affirms, that on one request, his Father would send "more than twelve legions of angels," Matt. 26:53;—more angels than there were soldiers in the whole Roman empire, whereof every one could destroy an army in an hour, as one did that of Sennacherib! And when all these belong unto the communion of the church, if the least evil be attempted against it, beyond or beside the will of God, they are all in readiness to prevent it, and revenge it. They continually watch against Satan and the world, to keep all the concerns of the church within the bounds and limits of the divine will and pleasure. They have a charge over all their fellow-servants in the blessed family, to take care of them in all their ways. Let us not fear the ruin of the church, whilst there is "an innumerable company of angels" belonging unto it.

Obs. IV. It is the most honourable society in the world; for all the angels in heaven belong unto it.—This poor, despicable, persecuted church, consisting for the most part of such as are contemned in the world, yet is admitted into the society of all the holy angels in heaven, in the worship and service of Christ.

Obs. V. And we may see hence the folly of that "voluntary humility, in worshipping of angels," which the apostle condemns, and which is openly practised in the church of Rome. And the apostle placeth the rise of this superstition in the church on a "voluntary," uncommanded "humility." For therein men debase themselves unto the religious worship of those who would be only their fellow-servants, in case they are real partakers of the benefits and privileges of the gospel.

Obs. VI. It is the highest madness for any one to pretend himself to be the head of the church, as the pope doth, unless he assume also unto himself to be the head of all the angels in heaven; for they all belong unto the same church with the saints here below.—And therefore, where mention is made of the headship of Christ, they are expressly placed in the same subjection unto him, Eph. 1:20–23.

Πανηγύρει καὶ ἐκκλησία πρωτοτόκων. 4. Another instance of the glory of this state is, that therein believers come to "the general assembly and church of the first-born," which are written in heaven.

Both the words here used, πανήγυρις and ἐκκλησία, are borrowed from the customs of those cities whose government was democratical; especially that of Athens, whose speech was the rule of the Greek language. Πανήγυρις, was the solemn assembly of all persons of all sorts belonging unto the city, where they were entertained with spectacles, sacrifices, festival solemnities, and laudatory orations. Λόγος πανηγυρικός, is "a commendatory oration." Hence is the word used for any great general assembly, as we here translate it, with respect unto praise and joy. In these assemblies no business of the state was transacted. But ἐκκλησία was a "meeting of the citizens," to determine of things and affairs which had had a previous deliberation in the senate. Hence it is applied to signify that which we call "the church;" or קְהַל, "the congregation." For that is an assembly for all the spiritual ends of the society, or all that belong unto it.

Herein there may be an allusion unto the assemblies of such cities. But I rather think the apostle hath respect unto the great assembly of all the males of the church of the old testament. This was a divine institution to be observed three times a-year, at the solemn feasts of the church, Exod. 34:23; Deut 16:16. And the assembly of them was called "the great congregation," Ps. 22:25, 35:18, 40:9, 10; being the greatest solemnities, and the most glorious in the whole church, a matter of triumph unto them all. Or it may be, regard is had unto the general assembly of the whole people at Sinai, in receiving of the law. But there

is also a great difference between those assemblies and this. For unto those civil and political assemblies, as also that of the church, it was necessary that there should be a local meeting of all that belonged unto them; but the assembly and church here intended are spiritual, and so is their meeting or convention. There never was, nor ever shall be, a local meeting of them all, until the last day. At present, such as is the nature of their society, such is their convention; that is, spiritual. But yet all that belong unto the general assembly intended, which is the seat of praise and joy, are obliged, by virtue of especial institution, whilst they are in this world, to assemble in particular church societies, as I have elsewhere declared. But we shall understand more of the nature of this assembly and church, when we have considered who they are of whom it doth consist,—

"Of the first-born, which are written in heaven." Some late expositors, as Schlichtingius, Grotius, and his follower, confine this unto the apostles and evangelists, with some others of the first Christian assembly. And in the same judgment Aquinas, with some others of the Roman church, went before them. The Greek scholiasts apply the words unto the elect, or all true believers: whom we must follow; for it is evident that not the apostles only are here intended. For, (1.) It may be inquired, whether the apostles themselves, upon their call by the gospel, did not come unto "the assembly of the first-born?" If they did, then are not they themselves alone here intended. (2.) Had the apostles alone their names written in heaven, as these first-born had, they, and none but they, are so written in heaven. But this is untrue, as we shall see. (3.) Are not all elect believers capable of this character? For, [1.] Doth not God call all Israel, who were a type of the spiritual church, his "first-born?" Exod. 4:22. [2.] Are not all believers "the first-fruits of the creatures?" James 1:18; which, as unto dedication unto God, answereth the first-born among men. All redeemed ones are "the first-fruits unto God, and to the Lamb," Rev. 14:4. [3.] Are they not all of them "heirs of God, and coheirs with Christ?" which is to be the first-born, Rom. 8:17; "heirs of salvation," Heb. 1:14. [4.] Are they not all "kings and priests unto God?" which compriseth the whole right of the first-born. Wherefore there is no reason to confine this expression unto the apostles; especially since most of them at that time were among "the spirits of just men made perfect." Wherefore it is elect believers that are intended.

But it may be yet inquired, whether all, or some sort of them only, be designed. Some suppose that the saints departed under the old testament, being gathered unto God as his lot and portion, are so called. But the truth is, these must of necessity be comprised under the following expression, of "the spirits of

just men made perfect." The most extend it unto all elect believers from the beginning of the world unto the end; which is the catholic church. And the present church hath a communion and fellowship with them all, on the same account that it hath them with the angels. But it is, in my judgment, more suitable unto the mind of the apostle, and his dealing in particular with the Hebrews, that the whole church of elect believers then in the world, consisting of Jews and Gentiles, should be designed by him. The collection of the elect among the Jews and Gentiles into one body, one general assembly, one church, is that which he celebrates elsewhere as one of the greatest mysteries of divine wisdom, which was hid in God from the beginning of the world, and not until then revealed. See Eph. 3:5–10. It was now made known, which was hid from those under the old testament, that there was to be a "general assembly," or "church of the first-born," taken out of the whole creation of mankind, without any respect or distinction of nations, Jews or Gentiles. So is this assembly described, Rev. 5:9, 10, "Thou hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests;" that is, one "general assembly and church of the first-born."

This was the great and glorious mystery which was hid in the will and wisdom of God from the beginning; namely, that he would collect into one body, one assembly, one church, all his elect, in all nations, Jews and Gentiles, uniting them among themselves by faith in Christ Jesus.

An accession unto this assembly, whose members were thus diffused throughout the world, is that which he proposeth as a great privilege unto these believing Hebrews. This he calls the "making of twain into one new man," by "reconciling both unto God in one body," Eph. 2:15, 16. And as he presseth this on the Gentile believers, as an inexpressible advantage unto them, namely, that they were admitted unto the participation of all those privileges which before were enclosed unto the Jews, as verses 11–19,—in which place there is a full description of this general assembly and church of the first-born,—so also he acquaints these believing Jews with the spiritual glory and advantage which they obtained thereby.

And their coming unto this assembly is opposed unto their coming unto mount Sinai; for therein there was both πανήγυρις, "a general assembly;" and ἐκκλησία, "a church." It was a general assembly of all that people, men, women, and children; and it was a church, as it is called, Acts 7:38, upon the account of the order which was in it, in the station of the elders, priests, males, servants,

and strangers, which I have elsewhere described. This was a general assembly and church, but of that people only, and that gathered together unto the dreadful and terrible delivery of the law. 'In opposition hereunto,' saith the apostle, 'you Hebrews, by faith in Jesus Christ, are come unto the general assembly and church of all the elect that are called throughout the world; you and they being made "one body;" yea, so strict is the union between you, "one new man," both equally reconciled unto God and among yourselves.'

Obs. VII. The revelation of the glorious mystery of this general assembly is one of the most excellent pre-eminencies of the gospel above the law.—A mystery it was of divine wisdom, hid in God from the beginning, but now shining out in its beauty and glory. An interest, therefore, herein is well proposed by the apostle as an eminent privilege of believers. Until the calling of this assembly, neither the first promise nor any of the institutions of the old testament could be perfectly understood, as unto what the wisdom of God had couched in them.

This is that church whereunto all the promises do belong; the church "built on the Rock, against which the gates of hell shall not prevail;" the spouse, the body of Christ, the temple of God,—his habitation for ever. This is the church which "Christ loved, and gave himself for;" which he "washed in his own blood," that "he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish," Rev. 1:5, Eph. 5:25–27. This is the church out of which none can be saved, and whereof no one member shall be lost.

Πρωτοτόκων. As unto the words themselves, there is a double allusion in them: (1.) Unto the rights of the first-born in general; and herein the apostle seems to have respect unto what he had observed before of Esau, who, being a profane person, sold his birthright. Those who are interested really in the gospel-church, all of them have, and do all of them retain, a right unto the whole inheritance. By their adoption they come to have a right unto all that God hath provided, that Christ hath purchased, unto the whole inheritance of grace and glory. Ἐν οὐρανοῖς ἀπογεγραμμένων. (2.) Unto the enrolment of the first-born in the wilderness, Num. 3:40–42. This is called "their names being written in heaven," Luke 10:20; in "the book of life," Phil. 4:3, Rev. 3:5, 17:8; "the book of life of the Lamb," chap. 13:8; "the Lamb's book of life," chap, 21:27. This book of life is no other but the roll of God's elect, in the eternal, immutable designation of them unto grace and glory.

This, therefore, is "the general assembly of the first-born, written" or enrolled "in heaven," namely, the elect of God, called, and by gratuitous adoption interested in all the privileges of the first-born; that is, made co-heirs with Christ and heirs of God, or of the whole heavenly inheritance. But although this is comprehensive of them all in all generations, yet believers come in a peculiar manner unto them of whom the church of God doth consist in the days of their profession. And further to make out this glorious privilege, we may observe,—

Obs. VIII. That Jesus Christ alone is absolutely the first-born and heir of all. See the exposition on chap. 1:2, where this is handled at large. He is the first-born among the elect, the eldest brother in the family of God, whereunto are annexed dominion and power over the whole creation; whence he is called "The first-born of every creature," Col. 1:15.

Obs. IX. Under the old testament, the promises of Christ, and that he was to proceed from that people according to the flesh, gave the title of sonship unto the church of Israel. So God calls them "his son, his first-born," Exod. 4:22; because the holy seed was preserved in them. So these words of the prophet, Hos. 11:1, "When Israel was a child I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt," are applied by the evangelist unto the person of Christ, Matt. 2:15. For although they were first spoken of the whole church of Israel, yet were they not so upon their own account, but of His alone who was to come forth of them.

Obs. X. All the right and title of believers under the old testament unto sonship, or the right of the first-born, arises merely from their interest in him, and participation of him, who is absolutely so. All things are theirs, because they are Christ's, 1 Cor. 3:22, 23. Without this, whatever are our outward enjoyments and privileges, whatever place of dignity we may hold in the visible professing church, we are vagabonds, that have neither lot nor portion in things spiritual and eternal.

Obs. XI. It is a glorious privilege to be brought into this blessed society, this general assembly of the first-born; and as such it is here proposed by the apostle. And we shall find it so, if we consider what company, society, or assembly, we belong unto without it; for this is no other but that of devils, and the wicked seed of the serpent.

Obs. XII. If we are come unto this assembly, it is our duty carefully to behave ourselves as becometh the members of this society.

Obs. XIII. All contests about church-order, state, interest, power, with whom the church is, are vain, empty, fruitless, unprofitable, among those who cannot evidence that they belong unto this general assembly.

Obs. XIV. Eternal election is the rule of the dispensation of effectual grace, to call and collect an assembly of first-born unto God.

Καὶ κριτῇ Θεῷ πάντων. 5. The apostle proceeds, in the next place, to mind us of the supreme head of this holy society, the author and end of it; which is God himself: "And to God, the judge of all." The words, as they lie in the text, are, "To the judge, the God of all;" but none doubt but that, as unto the sense of them, the name "God" is the subject, and that of "judge" the predicate in the proposition, as we read, "To God, the judge of all." It is not improbable, but that, in the enumeration of these glorious privileges, the apostle makes mention of the relation of God unto this society and communion, to beget in believers a due reverence of what they are called unto therein; and so he shuts up his improvement of this whole discourse, as we shall see. verses 28, 29.

There are two things in the words: (1.) That believers have a peculiar access unto God; (2.) That they have it unto him as "the judge of all," in a peculiar manner.

(1.) This access unto God by Jesus Christ is often mentioned in the Scripture as an eminent privilege. Without him they are afar off from God, placed at an infinite distance from him, by their own sin and the curse of the law; figured by the people's removal and standing afar off at the giving of the law, Exod. 20:18, 19. Neither was there any way to make an approach unto him; signified by the severe interdict against the touching of the mount, or taking one step over its bounds to gaze, when the tokens of his presence were upon it, in the legislation. But all believers have an access unto God by Christ. And hereof there are two parts: [1.] They have an access unto his grace and favour by their justification, Rom. 5:1, 2. [2.] An access unto him, and the throne of his grace, with liberty and boldness in their divine worship. This none have but believers; and they have it no otherwise but by Jesus Christ, Eph. 2:18; Heb. 4:15, 16, 10:19–22. See the exposition on the places.

(2.) They have an access unto God as "the judge of all." This may not seem a privilege; for it is the lot of all men to appear before his judgment-seat. But it is one thing to be brought before a judge to be tried and sentenced as a criminal; another, to have a favourable access unto him as our occasions do require. Such

is the access here intended. Considering God as the supreme governor and judge of all, men desire not, they dare not make use of, they cannot obtain, an admission into his presence: but we have this favour through Christ.

This therefore, in general, is the privilege intended, namely, that we have liberty and freedom to draw nigh unto God, even as he is "the judge of all;" which no others have, nor can pretend unto. But unto this access there are previously required the pardon of our sins, the justification of our persons, and the sanctification of our natures; without which no man can behold God as a judge, but unto his confusion. Behold, then, how great is the privilege of that state which we are called unto by the gospel, namely, which gives us such a sense and assurance of our pardon, adoption, justification, and sanctification, as that we may with boldness come unto the Judge of all on his throne!

On this supposition, there is a double consideration of God as a judge, which makes it our eminent privilege to have an access unto him as such: [1.] That it is he who will judge the cause of the church against the world, in that great contest that is between them. However here they may be cast in their cause, by such as pretend a right to judge them, they have admission unto his throne, who will execute judgment in their behalf. See Mic. 7:9, 10. And it is a glorious prospect which they take of God as a judge, in the execution of his righteous judgments on their enemies, Rev. 15:3, 4, 16:5–7. [2.] That it is he who will, as a righteous judge, give them their reward at the last day: 2 Tim. 4:8, "There is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day:" which are blessed privileges. And we may observe, for the further clearing of the mind of the Holy Ghost, as unto our own concernment, —

Obs. XV. In Jesus Christ believers are delivered from all discouraging dread and terror, in the consideration of God as a judge; such, I mean, as befell the people at Sinai in the giving of the law. They now behold all his glory in the face of Jesus Christ; which makes it amiable and desirable unto them. See our discourse of the glory of Christ, and of God in him.

Obs. XVI. Such is the pre-eminence of the gospel-state above that of the law, that whereas they of old were severely forbidden to make any approach unto the outward signs of the presence of God, we have now an access with boldness unto his throne.

Obs. XVII. As the greatest misery of unbelievers, is to be brought into the presence of this Judge, so it is one of the greatest privileges of believers that they may come unto him.—Hence is that cry of hypocritical sinners, Isa. 33:14.

Obs. XVIII. Believers have an access to God, as the judge of all, with all their causes and complaints.—As such he will hear them, plead their cause, and judge for them. However they may be here oppressed, in or out of the courts of men, the Judge of all will at all times receive their appeals, and do them right. This liberty no man can deprive them of; it is purchased for them by Christ, and makes their oppressions unsafe to the greatest of the sons of men. Wherefore,—

Obs. XIX. However dangerous and dreadful the outward state of the church may be at any time in the world, it may secure itself of final success; because therein God is judge alone, unto whom they have free access.

Obs. XX. The prospect of an eternal reward from God, as the righteous judge, is the greatest supportment of faith in all present distresses.

In all these things we are instructed.

Καὶ πνεύμασι δικαίων τετελειωμένων. 6. It followeth in the next place, that we are come to "the spirits of just men made perfect." They seem to be placed in this order because of their immediate presence with God, the judge of all. And there is included in this expression,—

(1.) That there are spirits of men in a separate state and condition, capable of communion with God and the church. That by these "spirits," the souls of men departed,—that essential part of our nature which is subsistent in a state of separation from the body,—are intended, none questioneth. It is granted by the Socinians, who yet deny unto them a state of glory, or any intelligent actings, until the resurrection. But we are said here to "come unto them," in those actings of our minds wherein this evangelical communion doth consist; and this requires that there be the like actings in them, without which there can be no such communion.

(2.) That the spirits of just men departed are all of them "made perfect." All that depart out of this world have been in it just or unjust, justified or not. But the spirits of all them who being here just, or justified, and departed out of the world, are made perfect. And as unto such, we "come unto them." Estius, one of the most modest and judicious expositors of the Roman church, concludes hence that there is a purgatory, wherein are the souls of some not yet made perfect. But, as we observed before, this state of purgatory is here plainly cast out of the communion of the catholic church. It hath none with it; although it

might so have, were there any such state. For Estius himself says, that our coming unto these spirits of just men made perfect is by love; whence, by the right of communion, we may desire the help of their prayers. So do they lessen the matter, when they come to speak of their idolatry, in their direct and immediate supplications unto them. But why may we not thus come unto the souls in purgatory, were there any such place or souls? For we are obliged to love them, as those who are of the same mystical body with us: and our prayer for them, which is thought necessary, is as great an act of communion as the supposed prayer of them in heaven for us. Such a state, therefore, is here excommunicated by the apostle, or cast out of the communion of the catholic church. And the expression of the apostle being indefinite, makes no distinction between the spirits of just men departed, as if some of them were made perfect, and some not, but is descriptive of them all; they are all made perfect.

(3.) The "just men" intended, were all those whose faith and the fruits of it he had declared, chap. 11, with all others of the same sort with them from the foundation of the world. And in following of their example, whilst they were on the earth, we are admitted into communion with them now they are in heaven. But as all these are included, so I doubt not but especial respect is had unto the times now past of the days of the gospel, and those who have departed in them; for as they were most eminent in this world, most of the apostles themselves being now at rest in glory, so an access unto them is very expressive of the privilege of the believing Hebrews who were yet alive.

(4.) These spirits of just men are said to be "made perfect," to be consummated. And herein three things are included: [1.] The end of the race wherein they had been engaged,—the race of faith and obedience, with all the difficulties, duties, and temptations belonging thereunto. So the apostle began that discourse which he now draws to the close of, by comparing our Christian obedience and perseverance therein unto running in a race, verses 1, 2. Now they who have "finished their course," who have "so run as to obtain," are said to be "consummated," or to sit down quietly in the enjoyment of the reward. [2.] A perfect deliverance from all the sin, sorrow, trouble, labour, and temptations, which in this life they were exposed unto. [3.] Enjoyment of the reward; for it is not consistent with the righteousness of God to defer it, after their whole course of obedience is accomplished. This consummation they have in the presence of

God, in perfection, according to their capacity, before the resurrection; there being nothing wanting unto them but the reception of their bodies in a state of glory. Though they are "made perfect," yet are they no more but "spirits."

And we have here a clear prospect into this part of the invisible world; namely, the state of the souls of just men departed. For it is declared, (1.) That they do subsist, acting their intelligent powers and faculties. For we cannot in any sense "come" to them that are not, or are as in a sleep of death, without the exercise of their essential powers and faculties. Yea, they live in the exercise of them, inconceivably above what they were capacitated for whilst they were in the body. And their bodies at the last day must be glorified, to make them meet instruments to exert the powers that are in them. (2.) They are in the presence of God. There they are placed by the apostle. For, in our access "unto God the judge of all," we "come to the spirits of just men made perfect," who must be in his presence. And they are so in his presence, as to be in conjunction with the holy angels in the temple-worship of heaven. (3.) They bear a part in the communion of the church catholic. Not as the object of the worship of men, nor of their invocation, or as mediators of intercession for them: such suppositions and practices are injurious to them, as well as blasphemous towards Christ. But they live in the same love of God which animates the whole catholic church below. They join with it in the ascription of the same praises to God and the Lamb; and have a concernment in the church militant, as belonging unto that mystical body of Christ, wherein themselves are sharers. (4.) They are "consummated," or "made perfect;" freed from all sins, fears, dangers, temptations, clogs of the flesh, and obnoxiousness unto death. Their faith is heightened into vision, and all their graces elevated into glory. And,—

Obs. XXI. A prospect by faith into the state of the souls of believers departed, is both a comfort against the fear of death, and a supportment under all the troubles and distresses of this present life.

Καὶ διαθήκης νέας μεσίτη Ἰησοῦ. 7 The apostle proceeds unto the immediate spring and centre of all this catholic communion; and that is, "Jesus the mediator of the new covenant." He calls him here by the name of "Jesus;" which is significant of his saving the church; which he doth as he is "mediator of the new covenant." What is this "new covenant" or "testament," and how and in what sense Jesus is the "mediator" of it, have been so fully declared in the exposition of chap. 9:15–17, etc., as also in other places, that I see no reason here again to take up that subject; nor do know of any addition needful thereunto. Thither, therefore, I refer the reader.

He is here mentioned in opposition unto Moses, who, as unto the general nature and notion of the word, was a mediator, or middle agent, between God and the people. But as unto the especial nature of the mediation of Jesus, he had no interest in it. He was not the surety of the covenant unto God on the part of the people: he did not confirm the covenant by his own death. He did not offer himself in sacrifice unto God, as Jesus did. But as an internuncius, a middle person, to declare the mind of God unto the people, he was a mediator appointed by God, and chosen by the people themselves, Exod. 20. Unto him, as such a mediator, the people came. "They were all baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea," 1 Cor. 10:2. In opposition hereunto, believers come to "Jesus the mediator of the new covenant."

And their coming unto him as such includes an interest in that new covenant, and all the benefits of it. Whatever, therefore, there is of mercy, grace, or glory, prepared in the new covenant, and the promises of it, we are made partakers of it all by our access unto Christ, the mediator of it. And whereas before he had evidenced from the Scripture how much more excellent this covenant is than the old one, or that made with the people at Sinai, there is force in it to persuade them unto steadfastness in the profession of the gospel; which is aimed at in all these arguings.

Obs. XXII. This is the blessedness and safety of the catholic church, that it is taken into such a covenant, and hath an interest in such a mediator of it, as are able to save it unto the utmost.

Obs. XXIII. The true notion of faith for life and salvation, is a coming unto Jesus as the mediator of the new testament.—For hereby we have an egress and deliverance from the covenant of works, and the curse wherewith it is accompanied.

Obs. XXIV. It is the wisdom of faith to make use of this mediator continually, in all wherein we have to do with God.—To be negligent herein, is to reflect on the wisdom and grace of God in appointing him to be the mediator of the covenant; and on his love and power for the discharge of that office.

Obs. XXV. But that which we are principally taught herein is, that the glory, the safety, the pre-eminence, of the state of believers under the gospel, consists in this, that they come therein to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant.—

This is the centre of all spiritual privileges, the rise of all spiritual joys, and the full satisfaction of the souls of all that believe. He who cannot find rest, refreshment, and satisfaction herein, is a stranger unto the gospel.

Καὶ αἵματι ῥαντισμοῦ. 8. Again, the most signal instance wherein the Lord Jesus exercised and executed his office of mediation on the earth, was the shedding of his blood for the confirmation of that covenant whereof he was the mediator. This blood, therefore, we are said in an especial manner to come unto. And he gives it a double description: (1.) From what it is; it is "the blood of sprinkling." (2.) From what it doth; it "speaketh better things than the blood of Abel." The Vulgar reads, "the aspersion" or "sprinkling of blood," without cause, and by a mistake.

(1.) There is no doubt but that the blood of Christ is called "the blood of sprinkling," in allusion unto the various sprinklings of blood by divine institution under the old testament. For there was no blood offered at any time, but part of it was sprinkled. But there were three signal instances of it: [1.] The blood of the paschal lamb; a type of our redemption by Christ, Exod. 12:21. [2.] The blood of the sacrifices wherewith the covenant was confirmed at Horeb, Exod. 24:6–8. [3.] The sprinkling of the blood of the great anniversary sacrifice of expiation or atonement by the high priest, in the most holy place, Lev. 16:14. All these were eminent types of the redemption, justification, and sanctification of the church, by the blood of Christ, as hath been before declared. But besides these, there was an institution of the sprinkling of the blood in all ordinary burnt-offerings and sacrifices for sin. And I no way doubt, but that in this appellation of the blood of Christ respect is had unto them all, so far as they were typical, by justifying and cleansing; what they all signified was efficaciously wrought thereby. But whereas it is immediately annexed unto the mention of him as mediator of the new covenant, it doth in an especial manner respect the sprinkling of the blood of the sacrifices wherewith the covenant at Horeb was confirmed. As that old covenant was ratified and confirmed by the mediator of it with the sprinkling of the blood of oxen that were sacrificed; so the new covenant was confirmed by the offering and sprinkling of the blood of the mediator of the new covenant himself, offered in sacrifice to God, as the apostle expounds this passage, chap. 9.

Wherefore the blood of Christ is called "the blood of sprinkling," with respect unto the application of it unto believers, as unto all the ends and effects for which it was offered in sacrifice unto God. And to be sprinkled with the blood of Christ, is, not by the imitation of his sufferings to be led unto eternal

life, which is the gloss of Grotius on the words; nor merely the belief of his death for the confirmation of the covenant, as Schlichtingius; (which are wide, if not wild interpretations of these words; without the least respect unto the signification of them, or to the nature and use of legal sacrifices, whence they are taken; or to the efficacy of the sacrifice of Christ, which is expressed in them;) but it is the expiating, purging, cleansing efficacy of his blood, as applied unto us, that is included herein. See chap. 1:3, 9:14, with the exposition.

Κρείττονα λαλοῦντι παρὰ τὸν Ἄβελ. (2.) He describes the blood of Christ by what it doth: "It speaketh better things than that of Abel." Some copies read παρὰ τόν, which must refer unto the person of Abel in the first place, "than Abel speaks." Some, παρὰ τό, which are followed by all the ancient scholiasts; and then it must refer to αἷμα, "blood," "the blood of Abel."

[1.] The blood of sprinkling "speaketh." It hath a voice; it pleads. And this must be either with God or man. But whereas it is the blood of a sacrifice, whose object was God, it speaks to God.

[2.] It speaks good things absolutely; comparatively better things than Abel's. To "speak" here, is to call for, cry for, plead for. This blood speaks to God, by virtue of the everlasting compact between the Father and the Son, in his undertaking the work of mediation, for the communication of all the good things of the covenant, in mercy, grace, and glory, unto the church. It did so when it was shed; and it continues so to do in that presentation of it in heaven, and of his obedience therein, wherein his intercession doth consist.

[3.] Comparatively, it is said to speak "better things than that of Abel." For it is granted here that Abel is the genitive case, to be regulated by αἷμα, or "blood." But there was a double blood of Abel: 1st. The blood of the sacrifice that he offered: for he offered of "the firstlings of his flock, and of the fat thereof," Gen. 4:4; which was an offering by blood. 2dly. There was his own blood, which was shed by Cain. All the ancients take "the blood of Abel" in this latter sense. Some of late have contended for the former, or the blood of the sacrifice which he offered. The blood of Christ, they say, was better, and spake better things than did Abel in his bloody sacrifice. But (be it spoken without reflection on them) this conjecture is very groundless, and remote from the scope of the place. For, 1st. There is no comparison intended between the sacrifice of Christ and those before the law; which belonged not at all to the design of the apostle. For it was only Mosaical institutions that he considered, in the preference which he gives to the sacrifice of Christ and the gospel, as is evident from the whole epistle.

Nor did the Hebrews adhere to any other. Yet the pretence hereof is pleaded in the justification of this conjecture. 2dly. The apostle hath a respect unto some Scripture record of a thing well known to these Hebrews; but there is not any one word therein of any speaking of Abel by the blood of his sacrifice. 3dly. It is expressly recorded, that Abel's own blood, after it was shed, did speak, cry, and plead for vengeance, or the punishment of the murderer. So speaks God himself: "The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground," Gen. 4:10. And the only speaking of Abel is assigned by our apostle to be after his death, Heb. 11:4,—that is, by his blood; whereunto express regard is had in this place. 4thly. The blood of the sacrifice of Abel did speak the very same things which the blood of Christ speaks, though in a way dark, typical, and obscure. It had nothing in itself of the same efficacy with the blood of Christ, but it spake of the same things. For being a sacrifice by blood, to make atonement in a typical representation of the sacrifice of Christ, it spake and pleaded, in the faith of the offerer, for mercy and pardon. But the opposition here between the things spoken for by the blood of sprinkling, and those spoken for by the blood of Abel, doth manifest that they were of diverse kinds, yea, contrary to one another. 5thly. The ground of the comparison used by the apostle is plainly this: That whereas, as unto men, the blood of Christ was shed unjustly, and he was murdered by their wicked hands, even as Abel was by the hands of Cain,—the consideration whereof might have cast many of the Jews who were consenting thereunto into Cain's desperation,—he shows that the blood of Christ never cried, as Abel's did, for vengeance on them by whom it was shed, but pleaded their pardon as sinners, and obtained it for many of them: so speaking things quite of another nature than did that of Abel. This, therefore, is the plain, obvious, and only true sense of the place.

We may now take a little view of the whole context, and the mind of God therein. It is a summary declaration of the two states of the law and the gospel, with their difference, and the incomparable pre-eminence of the one above the other. And three things, among others in general, are represented unto us therein.

First, The miserable, woful condition of poor convinced sinners under the law, and obnoxious unto the curse thereof. For, 1. They are forced in their own consciences to subscribe unto the holiness and equity of the law,—that "the commandment is holy, and just, and good;" so that whatever evil ensues thereon unto them, it is all from themselves, they are alone the cause of it. This gives strength and sharpness, and sometimes fury, to their reflections on

themselves. 2. They are terrified with the evidences of divine severity against sin and sinners; which, as it was evidenced and proclaimed in the first giving of the law, so it still accompanies the administration of it. 3. They have hereon a full conviction that they are not able to abide its commands, nor to avoid its threatenings. They can neither obey nor flee. 4. Hereon in their minds they put in a declinatory, as to its present execution; they would have God speak no more unto them about this matter. 5. Upon the whole, they must perish eternally, they know they must, unless there be some other way of deliverance than what the law knoweth of. What is the distress of this state, they know alone who have been cast into it. Others, who now despise it, will also understand it when the time of relief shall be past.

Secondly, The blessed state of believers is also represented unto us herein, and that not only in their deliverance from the law, but also in the glorious privileges which they obtain by the gospel. But these having been particularly spoken unto, I shall not mention them again.

Thirdly, A representation of the glory, beauty, and order, of the invisible world, of the new creation, of the spiritual catholic church. There was originally an excellent glory, beauty, and order, in the visible world, in the heavens and the earth, with the host of them. There is a pretence unto these things amongst men, in their empire, dominion, power, and enjoyments. But what are the one or other to the beauty and glory of this new world, which is visible only to the eyes of faith! He is blind who sees not the difference between these things. This is the state and order of this heavenly kingdom,—every thing that belongs unto it is in its proper place and station: God at the head, as the framer, erector, and sovereign disposer of it; Jesus, as the only means of all communications between God and the residue of the church; innumerable myriads of angels ministering unto God and men in this society; the spirits of just men at rest, and in the enjoyment of the reward of their obedience; all the faithful on the earth in a Sion-state of liberty in their worship, and righteousness in their persons. This is the city of the living God, wherein he dwelleth, the heavenly Jerusalem. Unto this society can no creature approach, or be admitted into it, who is not by faith united unto Christ, whatever pretences they may have to an interest in the visible church, framed as to its state and order by themselves unto their own advantage: without that qualification, they are strangers and foreigners unto this true church-state, wherein God is delighted and glorified. A view hereof is sufficient to discover the vain pretences unto beauty and glory

that are amongst men. What are all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them, but mortality, wasting itself in vanity and confusion, ending in endless misery. Herein is true, eternal, never-fading glory, etc.

Προσεληλύθατε. SECONDLY, Our last inquiry on these words is, How we "come" unto all these things? as it is in the beginning affirmed that we do, that all believers are so come; so come as to be admitted into, to be made members of this heavenly society, and to bear a part in the communion of it. I answer,—

1. The original of this communion, the framer of this society, is God himself, even the Father, in a peculiar manner. Therefore doth our admission into it arise from and depend upon some peculiar act of his. And this is election. That is his book wherein he enrols the names of all angels and men that shall be of this society, Eph. 1:3, 4.

2. The only means of an actual admission into this society is Jesus Christ, in his person and mediation. For although angels are not redeemed and justified by him, as we are, yet their station in this society is from him, Eph. 1:10. We cannot have an immediate access unto God himself; the power of it is not committed to angels or men. The ridiculous keys of the pope will open and shut purgatory only, which is excluded out of the territory of this heavenly kingdom. Wherefore,—

3. The means on our part whereby we come to this state and society, is faith in Christ alone. Hereby we come to him; and coming to him he makes us free citizens of the heavenly Jerusalem.

If this only true notion of the catholic church were received, as it ought to be, it would cast contempt on all those contests about the church, or churches, which at this day so perplex the world. He who is first instated, by faith on the person and mediation of the Lord Jesus Christ, in this heavenly society, will be guided by the light and privileges of it into such ways of divine worship in churches here below as shall cause him to improve and grow in his interest in that above. And he who is not admitted into this society, let him be in the bosom, or at the head of all the churches in the world, it will be of no advantage unto him.

Ver. 25–27.—Βλέπετε, μὴ παραιτήσησθε τὸν λαλοῦντα· εἰ γὰρ ἐκεῖνοι οὐκ ἐφυγον, τὸν ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς παραιτησάμενοι χρηματίζοντα, πολλῶ μᾶλλον ἡμεῖς οἱ τὸν ἀπ᾽ οὐρανῶν ἀποστρεφόμενοι; Οὗ ἡ φωνή τὴν γῆν ἐσάλευσε τότε· νῦν δὲ ἐπήγγελται λέγων, Ἔτι ἅπαξ, ἐγὼ σείω οὐ μόνον τὴν γῆν, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὸν οὐρανόν. Τὸ δὲ, Ἔτι ἅπαξ, δηλοῖ τῶν σαλευομένων τὴν μετάθεσιν, ὡς πεποιημένων, ἵνα μείνη τὰ σαλευόμενα.

Βλέπετε, "videte," Vulg., Bez. So we, "see" Syr., אֶזְדַּהַרוּ, "take heed:" in which sense this verb is always used in the imperative mood, "look to it," "take heed," "beware:" and so it were better here translated; though "see" be of the same sense in common use.

Μὴ παραιτήσησθε. Vulg., "ne recusetis," "that ye refuse not." Bez., "ne aversemini," "that ye turn not away from." Syr., דִּלְמָא תְּשְׁתֵּאלוּן, "that ye despise not:" which sense is expressed by ἀθετέω, chap. 10:28, "He that despised Moses' law," which is here included; for unavoidable penalties were peculiarly provided for despisers only.

Χρηματίζοντα. Vulg., "loquentem," "that speaketh." So the Syr., דְּטַלֵּל עִמְּכִין, "who speaketh with you." Bez., "divinitùs loquentem," or "oracula loquentem;" "who spake divine oracles;" spake divinely, or with divine authority, which the word requires.

Τὸν ἀπ᾽ οὐρανῶν. There is a verb wanting. The Vulg., the Syr., and we, supply "speaketh," "him that speaketh from heaven:" as I judge, not properly; ὄντα, is to be supplied, not λαλοῦντα; "he who is from heaven." "The Lord from heaven," 1 Cor. 15:47. "He that came down from heaven, the Son of man which is in heaven," John 3:13.

Ἐσάλευσε. Vulg., "movit," "moved." Syr., אֲזִיעַ, "commovit." Bez., "concussit." So we, "whose voice then shook the earth."

Ἐπήγγελται. Vulg., "repromittit;" "pollicetur," "denuntiavit;" "promiseth," or rather, "he hath promised," declared, pronounced. The word is used in the middle sense, though it be passive.

Ἔτι ἅπαξ. Syr., חַדָּא זְבַן, "one time;" "yet once."

Σείω, or as some copies read, σείσω, whence it is rendered "movebo," "concutiam;" the subject-matter being future, the expressions are of the same importance.

Ver. 25–27.—See [take heed] that ye refuse not [turn not away from] him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him who spake [divinely warning] on earth, how much more [shall not] we [do so,] if we turn away from him who [is] from heaven: whose voice then shook the earth: but now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven? And this [word,] Yet once more, signifieth the removing of the things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things that cannot be shaken may remain.

Having given a summary account of the two states of the law and the gospel, with the incomparable excellency of the latter above the former, the apostle draws from thence a charge and exhortation unto these Hebrews, as unto perseverance in faith and obedience; as also to the diligent avoidance of all that profaneness, or other sinful miscarriages, which are inconsistent therewithal. And he doth not herein intend only those amongst them who had already actually professed the gospel; but all those unto whom it had been preached and who as yet had not received it, so as to make profession of it. For Christ is as well refused by them unto whom he is preached, who never comply with the word at all, as by those who after a profession of it do again fall away. Yea, that first sort of persons,—namely, those who continue in their unbelief on the first tender of Christ in the preaching of the word,—are the proper objects of evangelical threatenings, which are here proposed and pressed. But yet are not they alone intended; seeing in the close of the 25th verse he puts himself among the number and in the condition of them to whom he spake,—"How shall we escape?" which can be intended only of them who had already made a profession of the gospel. In brief, he intendeth all sorts, in their several states and capacities, unto whom the gospel had been preached.

The words have many difficulties in them, which must be diligently inquired into, as they occur in the context. There are four things in them in general: 1. The prescription of a duty, by way of inference from the preceding discourse, verse 25. 2. An enforcement of the duty and inference, from the consideration of the person with whom they had to do, verse 25. 3. An illustration of that enforcement, from instances of the power and greatness of that person, in what he had done, and would yet do, verse 26. 4. An inference and collection from thence, with respect unto the law and the gospel, with what belonged unto them, verse 27.

First, We have an injunction of a necessary duty, proposed in a way of caution or prohibition of the contrary evil: "See that ye refuse not him that speaketh."

Βλέπετε. 1. The caution is given in the word βλέπετε. It is originally a word of sense, "to see with our eyes:" and so it is constantly used in the New Testament, unless it be in the imperative mood, and therein it always signifies, "to beware, to take heed," to be very careful about what is given in charge, Matt. 24:4; Mark 13:5, 33; 1 Cor. 8:9, 16:10; Gal. 5:15; Eph. 5:15; Phil. 3:2; Col. 2:8. And both the weight

of the duty and the danger of its neglect are included in it. And the apostle gives them this caution to shake of all sloth and negligence, from the greatness of their concernment in what was enjoined them.

Μὴ παραιτήσησθε. 2. The matter given in charge is, "not to refuse or turn away from, or despise him that speaketh." Of the word and its signification we have spoken before, on verse 19. But in this prohibition of an evil, it is the injunction of a duty that is intended; and that is the hearing of him that speaketh; and that such a hearing as the Scripture intends universally, where it speaks of our duty to God; namely, so to hear as to believe, and yield obedience to what is heard. This is the constant use of that expression in the Scripture; wherefore the caution, not to refuse, is a charge so to hear him that speaks as to believe and obey. Whatever is less than this, is a refusal, a despising of him. It is not enough to give him the hearing, as we say, unless also we obey him. Hence the word is preached unto many; but it doth not profit them, because it is not mixed with faith.

Τὸν λαλοῦντα. 3. We must thus not refuse τὸν λαλοῦντα, "him that speaketh." That is, say some, for τὸν λαλήσαντα, "him that hath spoken;" for the speaking of Christ himself was now past. But Christ yet continued to speak in an extraordinary manner by some of the apostles, and by his Spirit, in the signs, wonders, and mighty works which yet accompanied the dispensation of the gospel.

There is a general rule in the words, namely, that we are diligently to attend unto, and not to refuse any that speak unto us in the name and authority of Christ. And so it may be applied unto all the faithful preachers of the gospel, however they may be despised in this world. But it is here the person of Christ himself that is immediately intended.

And this command hath respect unto the double solemn charge given of God unto the church; the first on the closing of the law, and the other as the beginning and foundation of the gospel. The first, given to prepare the church for their duty in its proper season, is recorded, Deut. 18:18, 19, "I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words, which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him;"—which words are applied to the Lord Christ, Acts 3:22, 7:37. This the apostle now minds them of: 'Take heed that ye hear him; for if not, God will require it of you in your utter destruction.'

The other charge to this purpose was given immediately from heaven, as the foundation of the gospel, Matt. 17:5, "Behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him;"—which voice the apostle Peter tells us came "from the excellent glory" of the person of the Father," 2 Pet. 1:17, 18.

This is the foundation of all gospel faith and obedience, and the formal reason of the condemnation of all unbelievers: God hath given command unto all men to hear, that is, believe and obey, his Son Jesus Christ. By virtue thereof he hath given command unto others to preach the gospel unto all individuals. They who believe them, believe in Christ; and they who believe in Christ, through him believe in God, 1 Pet. 1:21: so that their faith is ultimately resolved into the authority of God himself. And so they who refuse them, who hear them not, do thereby refuse Christ himself; and by so doing reject the authority of God, who hath given this command to hear him, and hath taken on himself to require it when it is neglected: which is the condemnation of all unbelievers. This method, with respect unto faith and unbelief, is declared and established by our Saviour, Luke 10:16, "He that heareth you heareth me; and he that despiseth you despiseth me; and he that despiseth me despiseth him that sent me." Hence,—

Obs. I. Unbelief under the preaching of the gospel is the great, and in some respects the only, damning sin; as being accompanied, yea, consisting in, the last and utmost contempt of the authority of God.

Secondly, The apostle gives an enforcement of this duty. And this is taken from the consideration of the Person with whom they had to do herein, and a comparison between the event of the neglect of this duty in them, and a neglect of the same kind of duty in them unto whom the law was given.

Εἰ γάρ. The inference from the comparison is expressed in the conjunctive particles, "for it." 'Consider with yourselves how it was with them on their disobedience. "For if they escaped not," ' etc. For the opening of this verse, we must inquire, 1. Who it is that spake on earth. 2. How the people did refuse him. 3. How they did not escape thereon. 4. Who it is that is, or speaks, from heaven. 5. How he may be turned away from. 6. How they who do so turn from him shall not escape.

Τὸν ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς χρηματίζοντα. 1. Who it is that "spake on earth." Most expositors say it was Moses, and that the opposition is here made between him and Christ. But all things in the text, and the circumstances in matter of fact,

lie against this exposition. For, (1.) Respect is had unto the giving of the law, which is unquestionable; but herein Moses was not ὁ χρηματίζων, he that spake divine oracles unto the people, but God himself. (2.) The people thereon did not refuse Moses, but expressly chose him for a mediator between God and them, promising to hear him, Exod. 20, Deut. 5. (3.) Χρηματίζειν, though it sometimes signifies the answers that are given authoritatively by princes, yet in the Scripture it is applied unto God alone, though he may use the ministry of angels therein. See chap. 11:7, with the exposition. (4.) He who "spake on the earth," "his voice then shook the earth;" which was not the voice of Moses.

Some therefore say that it is an angel that is intended, who delivered all those oracles on mount Sinai in the name of God. This pretence I have at large elsewhere discarded; nor can it be reconciled unto the principles of religion. For if, notwithstanding all the dreadful preparation that was made for the descent of God on mount Sinai; and although it be expressly affirmed that he was there in the midst of the thousands of his angels, Ps. 68:17; and that he came with ten thousands of his holy ones to give the fiery law, Deut. 33:2; and that in giving the law he lays the whole weight of its authority on the person of the speaker, saying, "I am the LORD thy God:" if all this may be ascribed unto an angel, then there is one who is an angel by office and God by nature; or we are bound to take a created angel to be our God; nor can it be pretended that God ever spake himself unto mankind, seeing this was the most likely way of his so doing under the old testament.

Wherefore he that then spake on earth, who gave those divine oracles, was none other but the Son of God himself, or the divine nature acting itself in a peculiar manner in the person of the Son; and unto him all things do agree. What is purely divine was proper to his person, and what was of condescension belonged unto him in a way of office, as he was the angel of the covenant, in whom was the name of God.

But it will be said, 'There is an opposition between "him that spake on earth," and "him that is from heaven;" now whereas that was Christ, the Son of God, this cannot be so.' I answer, There is indeed no such opposition. For the opposition expressed is not between the persons speaking, but between earth and heaven, as the next verse sufficiently shows. And that verse declares positively, that it was one and the same person whose voice then shook the earth, and under the gospel shaketh heaven also.

It is therefore God himself, or the Son of God, who gave those oracles on mount Sinai.

Παραιτησάμενοι. 2. And it must be inquired how the people "refused him." The word here used by the apostle is the same with that which, verse 19, we render by "entreated to hear no more;" that is, deprecated the hearing of the voice of God. And that intended thereby was the request of the people, that God would not speak immediately unto them any more, because they could not bear the terror of it. This request of theirs God expressly approved of, "They have well said all that they have spoken," Deut. 5:28, 29. Wherefore although the apostle did plainly demonstrate hereby the terror of the giving of the law, and the dread of the people, which was all he aimed at in that place, yet it doth not appear how they "escaped not" on that refusal, seeing God approved of what they said and did.

I answer, (1.) That although the word be the same, yet different things are intended by it. Both that of verse 19 and this here agree in the general nature of a refusal, and so may be expressed by the same word; but the especial nature of the acts intended is diverse, or the word being in itself of a middle signification, including neither good nor evil, may have, as it here hath, a various application. (2.) In that former refusal, or entreaty not to hear the voice of God any more, there was this good which was approved of God, namely, that it expressed that frame of fear and dread which he designed to bring them unto by giving of the law. But though their words were so good, and so well suited unto their present condition, yet it discovered a want of that faith and boldness of children which were necessary to enable them to abide with God. With respect hereunto the apostle might justly date the beginning of their departure from God and refusal of obedience, which immediately ensued on this discovery that they liked not the presence and voice of God.

But the people's actual refusal of obedience unto him that gave them the law began in that which fell out not long after; namely in their making the golden calf, while Moses was in the mount, Exod. 32: from which they did not escape;—for besides that three thousand of them on that occasion were slain by the sword, God made it a record concerning that sin, "In the day when I visit I will visit their sin upon them; and the LORD plagued the people," Exod. 32:34, 35. After this ensued sundry other rebellions of the people; in all which they "refused him who spake on earth."

Οὐκ ἔφυγον. 3. How did they "not escape" hereon, or what did they not escape? They did not evade, they could not escape or go free, but divine wrath and vengeance overtook them. This is so fully manifested by an induction of instances, 1 Cor. 10:5–10, that it needs no further illustration. And we may see,—

Obs. II. That there is in all sins and disobedience a rejection of the authority of God in giving of the law.

Obs. III. No sinner can escape divine vengeance, if he be tried and judged according to the law. See Ps. 130:3.

Πολλῶ μαλλον ἡμεῖς. 4. Who is it, or how is he to be considered, whom we are now to hear, not to turn away from? "Much more shall not we, if we turn away from him that is" (or "speaketh") "from heaven." There are two words defective, and only implied in the original. The first we supply by escape, "How shall we escape." And herein all agree; the repetition of the sense of that word before used is necessary unto the comparison, and hath in it the enforcement of the exhortation, which is taken from the penalty of disobedience. Τὸν ἀπj οὐρανῶν. The second is in the last clause, τὸν ἀπ ’οὐρανῶν, "him from heaven." This some supply by λαλοῦντα, "speaketh," as we do; some by ὄντα, "is," "who is from heaven." And the defect of the verb substantive is so frequent, that it is naturally to be supplied when the sense will bear it, as it will do in this place, as we shall see immediately.

Ἀποστρεφόμενοι. We may observe further, that the apostle useth another word to express the refusal of hearing him who is from heaven,—namely, ἀποστρεφόμενοι,—than he did with respect unto them who refused him who spake on the earth; "turning away,"—"How much more we turning away;" that is, if we do so: and it is more extensive than the other word, including that infidelity and disobedience which is purely negative, without any positive refusal or rejection of the word.

These things being premised, it is evident who it is that is here intended, and in what sense he is spoken of. And this is fully declared by himself, John 3:12, 13, "If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things? And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven." Add hereunto verse 31, "He that cometh from above is above all; he that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth; he that cometh from heaven is above all." See John 6:33, 38. These places treat of the same matter with that intended in the text, namely, the revelation of heavenly things, or the myssteries of the will

of God by Jesus Christ. In each place it is affirmed, that to make this revelation he came from heaven; so that he was from heaven: but withal, whilst he did so, he was still in heaven,—"the Son of man who is in heaven." He was so from heaven, in his descent to declare the will of God, as that he was in his divine person still in heaven. Wherefore, as unto the promulgation of the gospel, he is said to be "from heaven" on many accounts: (1.) Of his full comprehension of all heavenly mysteries; for he came from the bosom of the Father, and thence declared him, with the mystery that was hid in him from the foundation of the world, John 1:18; Matt. 11:27. (2.) Of his infinite condescension in his incarnation and susception of the office of mediator, to declare the will of God; which in the Scripture is called most frequently his coming down from heaven. Thereby he was "the Lord from heaven." (3.) Of his sovereign, heavenly authority in the discharge of his office. God was with him and in him; the fulness of the Godhead dwelt in him bodily; and he had all power in heaven and earth committed unto him. (4.) Of his glorious ascension into heaven when he had accomplished his work in this world, represented by his ascent from mount Sinai, as the apostle declares, Eph. 4:8–10. (5.) Of his sending the Holy Ghost from heaven to confirm his doctrine, 1 Pet. 1:12. (6.) Of his opening heaven, and all the treasures of it, "bringing life and immortality to light by the gospel," in comparison whereof the things of the law are called "earthly things."

5. Thus was the Lord Christ, the Son of God, "from heaven" in the declaration of the gospel. And we must inquire, in the next place, what it is to "turn away from him." And sundry things are included in this expression.

(1.) That in the declaration of the gospel by Jesus Christ from heaven, there is a call, an invitation of sinners to draw nigh, to come unto him, to be made partakers of the good things contained therein. This way of the proposal of the gospel was foretold by the prophets, as Isa. 55:1–3. So it was constantly insisted on by him, Matt. 11:28, John 7:37, 38. "Come unto me," was the life and grace of the gospel. And what could be more, seeing they were the words of him who was "from heaven," fully possessed of all the bosom counsels of the Father? And herein it differed sufficiently from the law in the giving of it. For that was so far from being proposed with an encouraging invitation to come to God thereby, as that it was only a terrible denunciation of duties and penalties, which they that heard "could not endure," and removed as far as they could from it. With respect unto this invitation, unbelievers are said "to turn away from him;" which is the posture and action of them that refuse an invitation.

(2.) There is in it a dislike of the terms of the gospel proposed unto them. The terms of the gospel are of two sorts: [1.] Such as are proposed unto us; [2.] Such as thereon are required of us. Those proposed unto us include the whole mystery of the salvation of sinners by Jesus Christ, unto the praise and glory of God. Those of the latter sort are faith, repentance, and new obedience. The only motive unto those of the latter being the former, they cannot be taken into serious consideration until the first are duly pondered. Unless we see that which is good and excellent in the former terms, we cannot think it worth while to endeavour after the other. Herein, then, consists the beginning of the turning away from Christ, in the preaching of the gospel. Men like not the terms of it. They really account them foolish and weak,—unbecoming the wisdom of God, and no way answering what they design in religion. This the apostle declares at large, 1 Cor. 1:17–25. And there is no man who, upon the call of Christ, refuseth to believe and repent, but he doth it on this ground, that there is no such excellency in the terms of the gospel, no such necessity for a compliance with them, no such advantage to be obtained by them, as that it is either his wisdom or his duty to believe and repent that he may attain them. Herein do men "turn away from him that is from heaven." They like not the terms of the gospel, whereon he invites them unto himself; and therein despise the wisdom, grace, and faithfulness of God unto the utmost. This is unbelief.

(3.) There is in this turning away, a rejection of the authority of Christ. For besides the matter which he declared and preached, his personal authority had its peculiar power and efficacy to require obedience. This the apostle had here an especial respect unto. It was "he that was from heaven," being sealed unto this office thereby, God commanding all to hear him; and who spake in the name of him that sent him, even in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God: so as that all authority in heaven and earth was in him, and present with him. Wherefore a rejection and contempt of this sovereign, divine authority is contained in this turning away from him; that is, either in not receiving the gospel, or the relinquishment of it after it hath been professed.

And all these things have an influence into the "How much more," with respect unto punishment, here insisted on by the apostle. For put these things together, namely, infinite condescension in the declaration of the gospel, by the way of a gracious, encouraging invitation; the glory of the terms proposed therein, being the highest effect of infinite wisdom and grace; with the divine authority of him by whom the invitation and proposal are made; and we need

seek no further to justify the apostle's "How much more," in the aggravation of the sin of unbelief, as unto guilt and punishment, above any, above all sins whatever against the law. It is evident, on these considerations, that human nature cannot more highly despise and provoke God, than by this sin of unbelief. But,—

(4.) An obstinacy in the refusal of him is also included herein. It is a turning away that is final and incurable.

This, therefore, is the sin which the apostle thus expresseth, declaring the equity of its exposing men to greater punishment, or of making them more obnoxious unto eternal vengeance, than the rejection of the law; namely, a refusal of the authority of Christ proposing the terms of the gospel, and inviting unto the acceptance of them;—which is unbelief.

6. The last thing in the words is the inference and judgment that the apostle makes, on a supposition of this sin and evil in any; and this is, that "they shall not escape." And this he proposeth in a comparison with the sin of them that refused the obedience required by the law, with the event thereof. But the meaning hereof is so fully declared in the exposition on chap. 10:28, 29, as also on chap. 2:2, 3, where the same thing is spoken unto, as that I shall not here again insist upon it. And we may hence learn,—

Obs. IV. That it is the duty of the ministers of the gospel diligently and effectually to declare the nature of unbelief, with the heinousness of its guilt, above all other sins whatsoever.—It is here laid in the balance with the rejection of the law, which contains in it the guilt of all other sins, and is declared to have a weight of guilt incomparably above it. "How much more"?—none can justly conceive or express it. By most it is despised; they have no sense of it, nor can have, without a powerful conviction of the Holy Ghost, John 16:8, 9. Sins against the light of nature, or express commands of the law, most men are sensible of; but as unto unbelief, and all the consequents of it, they regard it not. But it is not more the duty of the ministers of the gospel to declare the nature of faith, and to invite men unto Christ in the gospel, than it is to make known the nature of unbelief, and to evidence the woful aggravation of it, Mark 16:16.

Obs. V. It is their duty so to do, not only with respect unto them who are open and avowed unbelievers, to convince them of the danger wherein they are, but also unto all professors whatever; and to maintain an especial sense of it upon their own minds and consciences. Thus the apostle placeth himself among

them who ought always to weigh and consider this matter: "Much more shall not we escape, if we turn away." There is a turning away after profession, as well as upon the first proposal of the gospel. The nature and danger thereof ought they diligently to press on their own consciences, and on them that hear them; for this is an ordinance of God for their good. By the declaration of its nature, they may be helped in the examination of themselves, whether they be in the faith or no; which they are obliged unto, 2 Cor. 13:5. And by the evidence of its danger from its aggravations, they may be excited continually to watch against it.

Obs. VI. This is the issue whereunto things are brought between God and sinners, wherever the gospel is preached, namely, whether they will hear the Lord Christ, or turn away from him. On this one point alone depends their eternal safety or misery. If they hear him, God puts an end unto the whole claim of the law against them, on the account of all other sins: if they refuse so to do, they are left under the guilt of all their sins against the law, with the unspeakable aggravation of the contempt of Christ speaking to them from heaven for their relief.

Obs. VII. The grace, goodness, and mercy of God, will not be more illustrious and glorious unto all eternity, in the salvation of believers by Jesus Christ, than his justice, holiness, and severity will be in the condemnation of unbelievers. Some light may be given hereinto from the consideration of what is included in this turning away from Christ, as was before declared.

Thirdly, The two next verses, verses 26, 27, contain an illustration of the enforcement of the exhortation in the foregoing verse. And it is taken, 1. From the mighty power of the person from whom they would turn away by unbelief, instanced in what he had done of old: "Whose voice then shook the earth." 2. From the work which by the same mighty power he would yet effect, as it was foretold by the prophet: "But now hath he promised, saying, Yet once more," etc. 3. From the nature and end of that promised work, which he declares, verse 27.

Οὗ ἡ φωνή. 1. (1.) The thing spoken of, is the voice of the person intended: "Whose voice;"—that is, the voice of him of whom he speaks, the voice of him who is from heaven; that is, of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the author of the gospel: for reference is had unto him who was last spoken of, nor is there any other in the context unto whom the relative οὗ, "whose," should refer.

(2.) The voice of Christ absolutely, is his great power in exercise. So all the mighty effects of providence are ascribed unto the voice of God, Ps. 29:3–9. In particular, the declaration and exerting of his power in giving of the law is here intended.

Τότε. (3.) The time wherein he put forth this mighty power was, τότε, "then,"—that is, at the time of the giving of the law, opposed unto what he would do now.

Ἐσάλευσε τὴν γῆν. (4.) That which is ascribed unto it then is, that it "shook the earth." The great commotion in the creation that was at mount Sinai, at the giving of the law, which he had before described, verses 18–21, is intended. In particular, the earth, or the mount, did "quake greatly," or was greatly shaken, Exod. 19:18. But that alone is not comprised in this expression; the whole commotion that was in all the particulars which we have considered is comprehended therein. And the shaking is said to be of the earth, because it was all on the earth and of earthly things; part of the earth, by a synecdoche.

And we have here an illustrious evidence given unto the divine nature of Christ. For it is unavoidable, that he whose voice this was is no other but he that speaks from heaven in the promulgation of the gospel; which to deny, is not only far from truth, but all pretence of modesty. Apparently it was one and the same person who spake from heaven in the promulgation of the gospel, whose voice shook the earth in giving of the law, and who promised in the prophet to shake heaven also. Unless this be granted, there is no sense nor coherence in the apostle's discourse. The Socinian expositor turns himself unto many inventions to evade the force of this testimony. [1.] He says, that he who gave the law, and then shook the earth, was a created angel. This presumption we have elsewhere discarded. But no place is more effectual unto that purpose than this text itself is. For he whose voice then shook the earth is the same, as the apostle affirms, with him who in the prophet promiseth to shake the heavens also; which is God, and not any creature. [2.] He says, "There is a difference between God sending an angel from heaven to give the law, and his sending Christ to declare the gospel; so as that he may be said to do the one from heaven, the other on the earth. For Christ did always declare himself one diverse from God, and only the legate of God; but the angel that came from heaven bare the person and name of God, and spake as if he were God himself." But, 1st. This plainly casts the advantage of honour and glory on the side of giving the law, above that of the promulgation of the gospel. For he who "bears the person and name of God, and speaks as if he were God," must needs be more honourable than he who could do no such

thing, but professed himself "one diverse from God;"—and so Schlichtingius hath fairly confuted the apostle, if you will believe him. 2dly. The Lord Christ did always profess himself, and bear himself as one distinct from the person of the Father; but that he did so as one "diverse from God," as one that was not God, is most false. See John 8:58, 10:30, 33, etc. And in like manner, in his following discourse, he doth plainly confess that Christ was inferior in glory unto the angel that gave the law, and is only preferred above Moses; if he be spoken of at all. But this is to wrest and pervert, and not to interpret the Scriptures.

2. The apostle adds another demonstration of the great power of Christ, in what he hath now promised to do: "But now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven." The words are taken from Haggai 2:6, 7: but the apostle quotes only part of the words there recorded; which were sufficient unto his purpose. The whole passage in the prophet I have at large explained, opened, and vindicated from the exceptions of the Jews, in the 13th Exercitation prefixed unto the first volume of this Exposition: I shall therefore here only speak unto them so far as the argument of the apostle is concerned in them.

Νῦν δέ. (1.) There are in the words the notes of an opposition unto what was spoken before, as unto time: "But now." And this now is not to be referred unto the time of the promise, 'He hath now promised;' but it denotes the time when that which was promised in the days of Haggai was to be accomplished: 'Then, or of old, he shook the earth; but now he will shake heaven also, according to the promise.'

Οὐ μόνον τὴν γῆν. (2.) The prophet affirming that he would "shake the heavens and the earth," the apostle, in an accommodation to his present purpose, expresseth it by, "Not only the earth," namely, as of old, "but the heavens also." Wherefore in this new shaking, a shaking of the earth also is comprised.

(3.) The principal inquiry is, what is the shaking of the heavens intended, and at what season it was to be done. And for the clearing hereof we must observe, —

[1.] The same thing and time are intended by the prophet and the apostle. Unless this be granted, there can be no force in this testimony unto his purpose; as there is none in the application of any testimony to confirm one thing which is spoken of another.

[2.] These things are spoken in the prophet expressly with respect unto the first coming of Christ, and the promulgation of the gospel thereon. This is not questioned by any Christians; and I have evidenced the truth of it against the Jews, in the place before directed unto. Yea, this single testimony is sufficient to bear the weight of the whole cause and contest which we have with the Jews about the coming of the Messiah. This time, therefore, and what fell out therein, is intended by the apostle; or the testimony he useth is nothing to his purpose.

[3.] The apostle declares, verse 28, that believers do now actually receive what is the fruit and effect of the work here described, namely, "a kingdom that cannot be moved:" before which the removal of the things that were shaken must precede; which could only be in the coming of Christ, and promulgation of the gospel.

[4.] Whereas some would refer all these things unto the second coming of Christ, namely, unto judgment at the last day, when the whole fabric of heaven and earth shall be shaken and removed; besides that it is wholly alien unto the whole design of the words in the prophet, it no way belongs unto the argument of the apostle. For he compares not the giving of the law, and the coming of Christ to judgment at the last day; but the giving of the law, with the promulgation of the gospel by Christ himself. For his design is in all things to give the pre-eminence unto the gospel, whereunto the consideration of the coming of Christ unto judgment is no way subservient.

[5.] There is no reason why we should take this "shaking not only of the earth, but of heaven," as it is in the apostle; or, of "the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land," as it is in the prophet; in a literal or natural sense. The prophet expounds it all in the next words, "And I will shake all nations." And they are spiritual things whereof the apostle doth discourse, such as end in that unshaken kingdom which believers do receive in this world.

[6.] Whereas, therefore, it is evident that the apostle treats about the dealing of Christ in and with his church, both in giving of the law and the promulgation of the gospel, that which is signified in these expressions is the great alteration that he would make in the church-state, with the mighty works and commotions which it was to be accompanied withal. Such it was, as if heaven and earth and all things in them had been shaken, as the things were which in the prophetical style are signified by them.

Σείω. [7.] Yea, take the words in any sense, and they are applicable unto the first coming of Christ, and the promulgation of the gospel. For take them literally, and in a natural sense, and the event was suited unto them. At his birth a new star appeared in the heavens, which filled the generality of men with amazement, and put those who were wise unto diligent inquiries about it. Ἀλλὰ καὶ τὸν οὐρανόν. His birth was proclaimed by an angel from heaven, and celebrated by a multitude of the heavenly host. In his ministry the heavens were opened, and the Holy Ghost descended on him in the shape of a dove. And hereon, from thence also, God gave express testimony unto him, saying, "This is my beloved Son." And these things may answer that mighty work in heaven which is here intimated. On the earth, wise men came from the east to inquire after him; Herod and all Jerusalem were shaken at the tidings of him. In the discharge of his work he wrought miracles in heaven and earth, sea and dry land, on the whole creation of God. Wherefore in the first coming of Christ, the words had their literal accomplishment in an eminent manner. Take the words metaphorically for great changes, commotions, and alterations in the world, and so also were they accomplished in him and his coming. No such alteration had been made in the world since the creation of it, as was then, and in what ensued thereon. All the heavens of the world were then shaken, and after a while removed; that is, all their gods, and all their worship, which had continued from time immemorial, which were the heavens of the people, were first shaken, then removed and utterly demolished. The earth also was moved, shaken, and changed. For all nations were stirred up, some to inquire after him, some to oppose him; whereon great concussions and commotions did ensue, until all the most noble parts of it were made subject unto him. So had the prophecy a full and just accomplishment.

[8.] But, as we observed before, it is the dealing of God with the church, and the alterations which he would make in the state thereof, concerning which the apostle treats. It is therefore the heavens of Mosaical worship, and the Judaical church-state, with the earth of their political state belonging thereunto, that are here intended. These were they that were shaken at the coming of Christ, and so shaken, as shortly after to be removed and taken away, for the introduction of the more heavenly worship of the gospel, and the immovable evangelical church-state. This was the greatest commotion and alteration that God ever made in the heavens and earth of the church, and which was to be made once only. This was far more great and glorious than the shaking of the earth at the giving of the law. Wherefore, not to exclude the senses before

mentioned, which are consistent with this, and may be respected in the prophecy, as outward signs and indications of it, this is that which is principally intended in the words, and which is proper unto the argument in hand. And this alone is consistent with the ensuing interpretation which the apostle gives of the words, or the inference which he makes from them, as we shall see. And whereas he cites the testimony of the prophet, he abides in the prophetical style, wherein the names of heaven and earth are frequently applied unto the state of the church. And we may observe, that,—

Obs. VIII. The sovereign authority and mighty power of Christ are gloriously manifested, in that signal change and alteration which he made in the heavens and earth of the church, in its state and worship, by the promulgation of the gospel.

Obs. IX. God was pleased to give testimony unto the greatness and glory of this work, by the great commotions in heaven and earth wherewith it was accompanied.

Obs. X. It was a mighty work, to introduce the gospel among the nations of the earth, seeing their gods and heavens were to be shaken and removed thereby.

Fourthly, The apostle makes an inference, verse 27, from the signification of one word in the foregoing verse, unto the truth designed in general in the whole epistle, but not anywhere expressly spoken unto, unless it be in the end of the eighth chapter: "And this word, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things which are shaken, as of things which are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain."

This is the conclusion of the whole argumentative part of this epistle, that which was aimed at from the beginning. Having fully proved the excellency of the gospel, and state of the church therein, above that under the law, and confirmed it by an examination of all the concernments of the one and the other, as we have seen; he now declares from the Scripture, according to his usual way of dealing with those Hebrews, that all the ancient institutions of worship, and the whole church-state of the old covenant, were now to be removed and taken away; and that to make way for a better state, more glorious, and that which should never be obnoxious to change or alteration. In the words, he expresseth the passage in the prophetical testimony, whereon he grounds his inference, and gives us the interpretation of it, with what necessarily ensues thereon.

Τὸ δὲ ἔτι ἅπαξ. 1. He saith, "And this word, Yet once more;" 'And this that is said;' or, 'Whereas it is said, Once more,'—ἔτι ἅπαξ; so the Greeks render עוֹד אַחַת, "yet one," or "once:" which determines, (1.) That such a work as that spoken of had been before; (2.) That it should be again, more eminently than formerly; (3.) That it should be but once for ever again. And from the consideration of all these the apostle takes the signification of the word, or what is contained in it, which he declares.

Δηλοῖ. 2. 'This word,' saith he, 'doth manifestly signify that which ensues.' And it doth so on the accounts mentioned. For, (1.) It plainly intimates that there was, or had been, a work of the same or an alike nature wrought before; for he says, that he will work "once more." This was the mighty work of God in giving of the law, before described. This the apostle makes evident, by distributing the things spoken of into that order, "Not the earth only, but the heavens." That which concerned the earth alone was past, in the giving of the law. (2.) It signifies plainly that he would work again, and that a work of the same kind; or else he could not be said to do it "once more." Now, the general nature of this work was, the erection of a new church-state, which God then wrought, and would now do so again. Τὴν μετάθεσιν. And therefore, (3.) It signifies the removal, the translation out of its place, of that which was before. The word signifies a translation, but withal such a removal thereby out of its place as contained a total abolition. Τῶν σαλευομένων. For, [1.] The things intended were shaken; and being of God's own appointment, as was the divine worship and state of the church under the old testament, they could not be shaken by God himself but in order to their removal. [2.] The things that were to be effected by this new work were to be introduced in their place; and therefore of necessity they were to be removed. So the apostle placeth the sole necessity of their removal, from the establishment of "the things that cannot be shaken." These therefore must be of the same general nature and use with them, namely, a new church-state, and new divine worship; that is, the gospel with its privileges.

Ὡς πεποιημένων. 3. The apostle intimates the general ground and equity of the removal of these shaken things, and the introduction of those that cannot be shaken; and that is, because they were "things that were made." Because they were made, they might be removed. For, (1.) They were made by the hands of men; so were the tabernacle, the ark, the cherubim, with all the means of divine service. And the apostle here expressly alludes unto the making of them by Bezaleel and Aholiab. And they might thereon be well removed, for the

establishment of that "tabernacle which God pitched, and not man." (2.) They were so made, as that they were made only for a season, namely, until "the time of reformation," Heb. 9:10. This the apostle hath abundantly proved, from their nature, use, and end. As such, therefore, it was equal they should be removed, and not have an eternal station in the church.

4. In the room of these things removed, things that are not, that "cannot be shaken," are to be established. These things in the next verse he calls "a kingdom that cannot be moved," which believers do receive;—that is, the things of the spiritual kingdom of Jesus Christ; the gospel with all its privileges, worship, and excellency, in relation to Christ, his person, office, and grace; the things which the apostle hath proved to be signified by all the institutions of the law and to be every way more excellent than they. These are so to be introduced and established, as to remain unto the consummation of all things.

We shall yet further observe, that although the removal of Mosaical worship and the old church-state be principally intended, which was effected at the coming of Christ, and the promulgation of the gospel from heaven by him, yet all other oppositions unto him and his kingdom are included therein; not only those that then were, but all that should ensue unto the end of the world. The "things that cannot be moved," are to remain and be established against all opposition whatever. Wherefore, as the heavens and the earth of the idolatrous world were of old shaken and removed, so shall those also of the antichristian world, which at present in many places seem to prevail. All things must give way, whatever may be comprised in the names of heaven and earth here below, unto the gospel, and the kingdom of Christ therein. For if God made way for it by the removal of his own institutions, which he appointed for a season, what else shall hinder its establishment and progress unto the end?

Ver. 28, 29.—Διὸ βασιλείαν ἀσάλευτον παραλαμβάνοντες, ἔχωμεν χάριν δι ' ἧς λατρεύωμεν εὐαρέστως τῷ Θεῷ μετὰ αἰδοῦς καὶ εὐλαβείας· καὶ γὰρ ὁ Θεὸς ἡμῶν πῦρ καταναλίσκον.

Ver. 28, 29.—Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: for our God [is] a consuming fire.

The apostle in these verses sums up both the doctrinal and hortatory parts of the epistle. For what by all his arguments he hath evinced, concerning the preference and pre-eminence of the gospel-state of the church above that under the law, he presseth as a reason for that obedience and constancy in profession

which he exhorts unto. And from hence unto the close of the epistle he brancheth his general exhortation into a prescription of particular duties of most importance unto his general end.

In the words there are, 1. A note of inference; "wherefore." 2. A privilege of gospel believers asserted; "we receiving a kingdom that cannot be moved." 3. A duty pressed on the consideration of it; which is, to "serve God acceptably:" described from, (1.) The means of it, "let us have grace;" and, (2.) The manner of its performance, "with reverence and godly fear."

Διό. 1. The note of inference, "wherefore," may respect either the whole discourse which he hath now passed through, or that immediately preceding, concerning the shaking and removal of the Judaical church-state, with the introduction and establishment of the things of the kingdom of Christ. The force of the exhortation ariseth equally from either of them. 'Seeing it is so, that the state of believers under the gospel is such as we have described, and the gospel itself whereunto they are called so excellent and glorious, it follows that this duty they are to apply themselves unto.' So,—

Obs. I. Such is the nature and use of all divine or theological truths, that the teaching of them ought constantly to be applied and improved unto practice; for faith and obedience are the end of their revelation. To remain within the compass of mere speculation, is to overthrow both their nature and use. Hence all preaching consists virtually in doctrine and use, or instruction and application; though the methods of it may be various, and ought to be varied as occasion doth require.

2. The privilege asserted is, that "we receive a kingdom that cannot be moved." And herein we may consider, (1.) The nature of this privilege; it is a "kingdom." (2.) The property of it, in opposition unto other things; "it cannot be moved." (3.) The way of believers' participation of it; "we receive it."

Βασιλείαν. (1.) As unto the nature of it, it is a kingdom, a heavenly, spiritual state, under the rule of Jesus Christ, whom God hath anointed, and set his king upon his holy hill of Zion, Ps. 2:6, 7. The state of the gospel, and the rule of Christ therein, were represented and promised from the beginning under the name and notion of a kingdom, being properly so. See Isa. 9:7. The kingly office of Christ, and his kingdom, were the common faith of the church of the old testament and the new. Whoever believed the promise of the Messiah, believed that he should be a king, and should have an everlasting kingdom, however the church of the Jews had lost the true notion of it in the latter days. This

kingdom in the Scripture is everywhere called "the kingdom of God," to distinguish it from all other dominions and kingdoms of the world,—the kingdom wherein Christ proceeds in the name and majesty of God for all the ends of his glory, and the salvation of the church. And this kingdom is usually distinguished into the kingdom of grace and the kingdom of glory; but improperly. For although the saints that are now in glory do belong unto this kingdom, by virtue of the communion that is between them and the church below in Christ as their common head, yet this kingdom of Christ shall cease when the state of glory shall fully take place. So the apostle expressly declares, 1 Cor. 15:24–28. Wherefore the kingdom of God, the kingdom of heaven, so often mentioned in the Scripture, is that which we call the kingdom of God only. It is true, the saints do and shall reign in heaven, whereon that state may be called the kingdom of glory; but the promised kingdom of the Messiah, is that rule which is to be continued unto the end of this world, and no longer. And at present those in heaven and those on earth do constitute but one kingdom, though they are in various conditions therein.

This kingdom, then, is that rule of Christ in and over the gospel-state of the church, which the apostle hath proved to be more excellent than that of the law. Hereunto belong all the light, liberty, righteousness, and peace, which by the gospel we are made partakers of, with all the privileges above the law insisted on by the apostle. Christ is the king, the gospel is his law, all believers are his subjects, the Holy Spirit is its administrator, and all the divine treasures of grace and mercy are its revenue. The reader may see a delineation of this kingdom in our exposition on chap. 1:2. This is the kingdom which is here intended, the present actual participation whereof is made the foundation of the exhortation ensuing, being undeniably cogent unto that end.

Ἀσάλευτος. (2.) The especial property of this kingdom is, that it is ἀσάλευτος, —such as cannot be shaken, or moved. It is true of it universally, and only, it cannot be moved in any sense, by any ways or means; and this is the only kingdom that cannot be moved. To speak of the unshaken, unmovable kingdom, is all one as if we expressly mentioned the kingdom of Christ, seeing that only is so. All other kingdoms have been, or shall be, shaken and overturned; all boastings and expectations to the contrary are but vain. No dominion ever so dreamed of eternity as did the Roman empire; but it hath not only been shaken, but broken to pieces, and scattered like chaff before the wind. See Dan. 2:44, 7:14, 27. No external opposition shall ever be able to shake or

move this kingdom. The "gates of hell shall not prevail against it," Matt. 16:18. No internal decays shall ruin it. The spring of it is in Him who lives for ever, and who hath the keys of hell and death.

These things are true, the kingdom of Christ is thus immovable: but that which is here peculiarly intended is, that it is not obnoxious unto such a shaking and removal as the church-state was under the old testament; that is, God himself will never make any alteration in it, nor ever introduce another church-state or worship. God hath put the last hand, the hand of his only Son, unto all revelations and institutions. No addition shall be made unto what he hath done, nor alteration in it. No other way of calling, sanctifying, ruling, and saving of the church, shall ever be appointed or admitted; for it is here called an immovable kingdom in opposition unto the church-state of the Jews, which God himself first shook, and then took away, for it was ordained only for a season.

Παραλαμβάνοντες. (3.) Believers receive this kingdom. As the apostle had before joined himself with them in the threatening, "How shall we escape?" so he doth here in the privilege, "We receiving:" 'You and I, even all that believe.' And how they do so, we must inquire.

[1.] Their interest in this kingdom is called their receiving it, because they have it by gift, grant, or donation from God their Father: Luke 12:32, "Fear not, little flock," saith Christ, "it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom;" 'freely to grant unto you an interest in his heavenly kingdom.' [2.] They receive it in its doctrine, rule, and law, owning its truth, and submitting unto its authority. They "obey from the heart the form of doctrine which is delivered to them," Rom. 6:17; which constitutes them formally the subjects of his kingdom. [3.] They receive it in the light, grace, mercy, and spiritual benefits of it. Such a kingdom it is as whose treasures and revenues consist in these things, namely, light, liberty, righteousness, peace, grace and mercy. For "the kingdom of God is righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost," Rom. 14:17. All these do they receive, in right, title, and possession, according to their various measures; and hereon are properly said to receive the kingdom itself. [4.] They receive it in the privileges of it; which may be referred unto two heads: 1st. Dignity; 2dly. Safety; which are the two advantages of any kingdom added unto their wealth, which in this consists in the treasures before mentioned. As to the first, or dignity, this is such a kingdom as wherein, though with respect to Christ and his rule we are absolutely subjects, yet with respect unto others we are absolutely free: "Ye are bought with a price; be not ye servants of men," 1 Cor.

7:23; that is, in all things which belong to this kingdom. And not only so, but all the subjects of this kingdom are, with respect unto their acceptance with God, and power over their enemies, kings also: "A kingly priesthood," 1 Pet. 2:9; "Kings and priests unto God," Rev. 1:6. And, secondly, for safety, they are all built on the Rock, against which the gates of hell cannot prevail. This dignity and safety are of eminent consideration, when we are said "to receive a kingdom;" for they are principal ornaments and advantages of such a state. [5.] They receive it by an initiation into the sacred mysteries of it, the glory of its spiritual worship, and their access unto God thereby. Herein consists the glory of the administration of this kingdom, 2 Cor. 3. And all believers have a right unto all the mystical ordinances of divine worship in this kingdom, which all others are excluded from. [6.] They receive it in its outward rule and discipline. And in all these things they receive it as a pledge of a future reign in glory. Wherefore,—

Obs. II. The privileges which believers receive by the gospel are inconceivable.—They are, a kingdom, the kingdom of God or Christ, a spiritual, heavenly kingdom, replenished with inexhaustible treasures of spiritual blessings and advantages.

Obs. III. Believers are not to be measured by their outward state and appearance in the world, but by the interest they have in that kingdom which it is their Father's good pleasure to give them.

Obs. IV. It is assuredly their duty in all things to behave themselves as becomes those who receive such privileges and dignity from God himself.

Obs. V. The obligation from hence unto the duty of serving God here exhorted unto, of so serving God as is here described, is evident and unavoidable.—Those on whom it hath not an efficacy, have no real interest in this privilege, whatever they pretend.

Obs. VI. Spiritual things and mercies do constitute the most glorious kingdom that is in the world, even the kingdom of God.

Obs. VII. This is the only kingdom that shall never be moved, nor ever can be so, however hell and the world do rage against it.

3. The duty exhorted unto, on the consideration of this blessed state and privilege is, that "we should serve God acceptably." There is a duty previously required unto this enjoined us, which is to "have grace;" and this is introduced

only as an effect thereof: "Let us have grace, whereby we may serve God." But whereas this is the end for which we should endeavour to have grace, I place it as the duty exhorted unto in the circumstances described.

Λατρεύωμεν. The word λατρεύω doth most frequently, if not only, signify that service unto God which consists in his worship; namely, in prayer and the observance of some other institutions of divine service. See Luke 2:37; Acts 7:7, 27:23; Rom. 1:9, 25; Phil. 3:3; 2 Tim. 1:3; Heb. 9:9, 10:2, 13:10; Rev. 7:15. I will not deny but that it may comprise the whole of gospel obedience, which is λογικὴ λατρεία, Rom. 12:1,—our "reasonable service;" but I judge that here peculiar respect is had unto the worship of God according to the gospel, which was brought in upon the removal of all those institutions of worship which were appointed under the old testament. Herein the apostle would have the believing Hebrews to be diligent; which they would not be in a due manner without an equal attendance unto all other duties of evangelical obedience.

Εὐαρέστως. Wherefore it is added, that we should thus serve God "acceptably," as we have well rendered the word; that is, so as that we may be accepted, or find acceptance with him. As it respects the worship of God, it is sometimes applied unto the persons that perform it, sometimes unto the worship itself performed. With respect unto both, it signifies that which is well-pleasing unto God, that which is accepted with him, Rom. 12:1, 2; 2 Cor. 5:9; Eph. 5:10; Phil. 4:18; Col. 3:20; Heb. 11:5, 6: in all which places, and others, the verb or adjective is used; the verb only in this place, "acceptably."

There is an intimation that there may be a performance of the duties of divine worship, when yet neither the persons that perform them nor the duties themselves are accepted with God. So was it with Cain and his sacrifice; so is it with all hypocrites always. The principal things required unto this acceptation are, (1.) That the persons of the worshippers be "accepted in the Beloved." God had respect unto Abel, then to his offering. (2.) That the worship itself, in all the duties of it, and the whole manner of its performance, be of his own appointment and approbation. Hereon all Judaical observances are rejected, because now disapproved by him. (3.) That the graces of faith, love, fear, reverence, and delight, be in actual exercise: for in and by them alone, in all our duties, we give glory unto God; which the apostle declares in the remaining words of these verses.

Ἔχωμεν χάριν. 4. In order unto this serving of God, it is required of us, in a way of duty, that we "have grace." Some copies have ἔχομεν, which are followed by the Vulgar and some other translations, "We have grace." But the most, and most ancient copies, have ἔχωμεν, "Let us have," which suits the other words and design of the place; for it is not a privilege asserted, but a duty prescribed.

Χάριν here may be taken in a double sense: (1.) For the free grace and favour of God in Christ, which we obtain by the gospel. And in this sense it is most frequently used in the Scripture. (2.) For internal, sanctifying, aiding, assisting grace, as it is in other places innumerable. And the word ἔχωμεν may have a double signification also. For it is not a bare having or possession that is intended; for that is not the object of an exhortation in the way of a duty: but it signifies either "to retain and hold fast," as our translators render it in the margin; or to "obtain and improve;" in which sense the word is often used.

And these double significations of the words are suited unto one another. Take ἔχωμεν, "Let us have," in the first sense, "to retain and hold fast," and it answers unto χάριν, or "grace," in the first sense of the word, namely, the grace and favour of God, which we obtain by the gospel. This we are exhorted unto, 1 Cor. 15:1; Gal. 5:1; Phil. 1:27, 4:1; 1 Thess. 3:8. See Rom. 5:2. Thus the duty intended should be perseverance in the faith of the gospel, whereby alone we are enabled to "serve God acceptably." Take it in the latter sense, and it answers unto "grace" in the latter sense also; that is, for internal, spiritual aids of grace, enabling us unto this duty of serving God, without which we cannot so do. This is the proper sense of the place. The service of God in such a way and manner as is acceptable unto him is required of us,—it is due upon the account of the unspeakable privileges which we receive by the gospel, before declared;—but this of ourselves, without special divine aid and assistance, we are no way able to perform: for "without Christ we can do nothing." We have no sufficiency of ourselves to think or do any thing as we ought: "It is God who worketh in us both to will and to do of his own good pleasure." It is therefore in order unto the end of serving acceptably, required of us, that we have, that is, that we obtain and improve, this grace of God, or the aids of divine grace.

Διὶ ἧς. Now, whereas this "grace" may be considered either as unto its essence and the first communication of it unto us, or as unto its degrees and measures with respect unto its continual exercise, it may be here considered both ways. For without it in the first sense, as it is sanctifying, we cannot serve God acceptably at all; and in the latter, it is required to be exercised in every particular duty of divine worship. And this is especially intended, the former

being supposed. 'You that have received grace essentially considered, unto your sanctification, endeavour much an increase of it in its degrees and measures, so that being in continual exercise, you may be enabled by it to serve God acceptably.' And two things evince this sense: (1.) That this grace is assigned as the instrumental efficient cause of the duty proposed: "By which," 'by virtue whereof, in whose strength, by which you are enabled.' Now, this is no other but internal, aiding, assisting grace, in its exercise. (2.) The things prescribed to accompany this service of God on our part, namely, "reverence and godly fear," are such graces themselves, or acts of that grace.

It is most true, that the holding fast the grace of the gospel, the doctrine of the love and favour of God in Christ Jesus, is an effectual means of enabling us to serve God acceptably. For thereby, or by the exercise of faith therein, we do derive spiritual strength from Christ, as the branches derive juice and nutriment from the vine, to enable us thereunto. And if we decay in the faith thereof, much more if we relinquish it, we can never serve God in a due manner. I would not therefore exclude that sense of the words, though I judge the latter to be more especially intended. And,—

(1.) Without this grace we cannot serve God at all. He accounts not that as his worship or service which is performed by graceless persons. (2.) Without this grace in actual exercise we cannot serve God acceptably; for it is the exercise of grace alone that is the life and soul of divine worship. (3.) To have an increase in this grace as unto its degrees and measures, and to keep it in exercise in all duties of the service of God, is a duty required of believers by virtue of all the gospel privileges which they receive from God; for herein consists that revenue of glory which on their account he expecteth and requireth. (4.) This is the great apostolical canon for the due performance of divine worship, namely, "Let us have grace to do it;" all others are needless and superfluous.

Μετὰ αἰδοῦς καὶ εὐλαβείας. 5. The manner of the performance of the duty exhorted unto is also prescribed. And this is, that it be done "with reverence and godly fear." These words are not anywhere else used together with respect unto the service of God, nor apart. Αἰδώς, which we translate "reverence," is but once more used in the New Testament, where it signifies "pudor" or "modestia,"—"shame-facedness" or "modesty," 1 Tim. 2:9; but nowhere else. It is applied to denote a grace or virtue in the worship of God. Εὐλαβεία is used only here, and chap. 5:7; where see the exposition. See also chap. 11:7. We render it,

"with godly fear." For the verb is sometimes used for "fear," without any respect to religion, Acts 23:10; and the adjective, for "religious" or "devout," without any especial respect to fear, Luke 2:25; Acts 2:5, 8:2: both are included in it.

The sense of the words in this place may be learned best from what they are opposed unto. For they are prescribed as contrary unto some such defects and faults in divine worship as from which we ought to be deterred by the consideration of the holiness and severity of God; as is manifest from the addition of it in the next words, "For our God is a consuming fire." Now those vices from which we ought to be deterred by this consideration, are, (1.) Want of a due sense of the majesty and glory of God, with whom we have to do. For whereas he had provided against this evil under the old testament, by the dread and terror which were ingenerated in the people by the giving of the law, by many severe interdictions of their approach unto pledges of his presence among them, and the prescription of outward ceremonies in all their accesses unto him; all these things being now removed, yet a deep, spiritual sense of his holiness and greatness ought to be retained in the mind of all that draw nigh unto him in his worship. (2.) Want of a due sense of our own vileness, and our infinite distance from him in nature and condition; which is always required to be in us. (3.) Carnal boldness, in a customary performance of sacred duties, under a neglect of endeavouring the exercise of all grace in them; which God abhors. To prevent these and the like evils, these graces or duties are prescribed. Wherefore αἰδώς, "or pudor spiritualis," is "a holy abasement of soul in divine worship, in a sense of the majesty of God, and our own vileness, with our infinite distance from him." This, in extraordinary instances, is called "blushing," being "ashamed," and "confusion of face," Ezra 9:6; Dan. 9:7. So it is in extraordinary cases; but for the essence of it, it ought always to accompany us in the whole worship of God. And εὐλαβεία is, "a religious awe on the soul in holy duties, from a consideration of the great danger there is of sinful miscarriages in the worship of God, and of his severity against such sins and offences." Hereby the soul is moved and excited unto spiritual care and diligence, not to provoke so great, so holy and jealous a God, by a neglect of that exercise of grace which he requires in his service, which is due unto him on the account of his glorious excellencies.

And we may consider of how great importance this exhortation and duty are. For this charge of serving God from a principle of grace, in the manner described, is that which is given unto us in the consideration of the kingdom which we have received, and enforced with that of the terror of the Lord with respect unto all miscarriages therein; which is urged also in the last verse.

Ver. 29.—"For our God [is] a consuming fire."

This is the reason making the foregoing duty necessary. 'Therefore ought we to serve God with reverence and fear, because "he is a consuming fire." ' The words are taken from Deut. 4:24, where they are used by Moses to deter the people from idols or graven images in the worship of God; for this is a sin that God will by no means bear withal. And the same description of God is applied here by the apostle unto the want of grace with reverence and fear in that worship which he hath appointed. We may not please ourselves that the worship itself which we attend unto is by divine institution, not idolatrous, not superstitious, not of our own invention; for if we are graceless in our persons, devoid of reverence and godly fear in our duties, God will deal with us even as with them who worship him after their own hearts' devisings.

There is a metaphor in the expression. God is compared to, and so called a "devouring fire," because of a likeness in effects as unto the case under consideration. For as a vehement fire will consume and devour whatever combustible matter is cast into it, so will God with a fiery terror consume and destroy such sinners as are guilty of the sin here prohibited. And as such, will such sinners,—namely, hypocrites and false-worshippers,—apprehend him to be, when they fall under convictions, Isa. 33:14.

Ὁ Θεὸς ἡμῶν. And he is called herein "our God;" as in Moses to the people, "The LORD thy God." A covenant relation unto him is in both places intimated. Wherefore although we have a firm persuasion that he is our God in covenant, yet it is his will that we should have holy apprehensions of his greatness and terror towards sinners. See 2 Cor. 5:10, 11.

Πῦρ καταναλίσκον. Two things are represented unto us in this expression, "A consuming fire." 1. The nature of God, as declared in the first commandment. And, 2. His jealousy with respect unto his worship, as it is expressed in the second.

1. The holiness and purity of his nature, with his severity and vindictive justice, are represented hereby. And these, as all other his essential properties, are proposed unto us in the first commandment. From them it is that he will consume impenitent sinners, such as have no interest in the atonement, even as fire consumes that which is cast into it.

2. His jealousy with reference unto his worship is here also represented, as declared in the second commandment. So it is added in that place of Moses, "The LORD thy God is a consuming fire, a jealous God." This title God first gave himself with respect unto his instituted worship, Exod. 20:5. And this affection or property of jealousy is figuratively ascribed unto God, by an anthropopathy. In man, it is a vehement affection and inclination, arising from a fear or apprehension that any other should have an interest in or possess that which they judge ought to be peculiar unto themselves. And it hath place principally in the state of marriage, or that which is in order thereunto. It is therefore supposed that the covenant between God and the church hath the nature of a marriage covenant, wherein he calleth himself the husband thereof, and saith that he is married unto it, Isa. 54:5; Jer. 3:14. In this state, it is religious worship, both as unto the outward form of it in divine institution, and its inward form of faith and grace, which God requires, as wholly his own. With reference, therefore, unto defects and miscarriages therein, he assumeth that affection unto him, and calleth himself "a jealous God." And because this is a vehement, burning affection, God is said on the account of it to be "a consuming fire." And we may observe, that,—

Obs. VIII. However God takes us near unto himself in covenant, whereby he is our God, yet he requires that we always retain due apprehensions of the holiness of his nature, the severity of his justice against sinners, and his ardent jealousy concerning his worship.

Obs. IX. The consideration of these things, and the dread of being by guilt obnoxious unto their terrible consuming effects, ought to influence our minds unto reverence and godly fear in all acts and parts of divine worship.

Obs. X. We may learn how great our care and diligence about the serving of God ought to be, which are pressed on us by the Holy Ghost from the consideration of the greatness of our privileges on the one hand, namely, our receiving the kingdom; with the dreadful destruction from God on the other, in case of our neglect herein.

Obs. XI. The holiness and jealousy of God, which are a cause of insupportable terror unto convinced sinners, driving them from him, have towards believers only a gracious influence into that fear and reverence which causes them to cleave more firmly unto him.

Μόνω τῶ Θεῶ δόξα.

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CHAPTER 13

IN the close of the epistle, contained in this chapter, the apostle gives us new instances of that divine wisdom wherewith he was actuated in writing of the whole; which the apostle Peter refers unto, 2 Pet. 3:15. And as it will communicate an inexpressible sense of itself unto every intelligent reader, who meditates upon it with that faith and reverence which are required in the perusal of these holy writings; so we may give, at our entrance into the exposition of the chapter, some few instances in general wherein it doth eminently appear.

1. Having solidly laid the foundations of faith and obedience, in the declaration of the mystery of the person and offices of Christ, he descends unto his exhortation with respect unto evangelical and moral duties, which he proposes unto the church in one distinct view throughout this chapter. And herein, (1.) He prescribes by his own example, as he also doth in most of his other epistles, the true order and method of preaching the gospel; that is, first to declare the mysteries of it, with the grace of God therein, and then to improve it unto practical duties of obedience. And they will be mistaken, who in this work propose unto themselves any other method; and those most of all, who think one part of it enough, without the other. For as the declaration of spiritual truths, without instruction how they are the vital, quickening form of obedience, and the application of them thereunto, tends only unto that "knowledge which puffeth up, but doth not edify;" so the pressing of moral duties, without a due declaration of the grace of God in Christ Jesus, which alone enables us unto them, and renders them acceptable unto God, with their necessary dependence thereon, is but to deceive the souls of men, and lead them out of the way, and off from the gospel. (2.) Issuing all his discourses in this exhortation unto spiritual or evangelical obedience, he declares that the science or knowledge of divine mysteries is partly practical, as unto its next and immediate end in the minds and souls of men. It is so far from truth, that by the liberty of the gospel we are freed from an obligation unto spiritual and

moral duties, that the use of all the truths revealed in it, is, as to direct us unto their right performance, so to lay more and new obligations on us to attend with all diligence unto them. (3.) In this place, insisting at large on the doctrine of the gospel, he doth but name the heads of the duties which he exhorts unto: for they were for the most part known and confessed amongst the Hebrews, whereas the other was greatly exposed and contradicted. And herein also he hath set an example unto the preachers of the gospel, as unto the times and circumstances of their work. For therein ought they to labour with most diligence, where they find the greatest opposition made unto the truth, or the greatest difficulty in the admission of it. (4.) He manifests, in this method of his procedure, that it is to no purpose to deal with men about duties of obedience, before they are well fixed in the fundamental principles of faith. Herein he labours for the instruction and confirmation of these Hebrews, before he engages on his prescription of duties.

2. In the enumeration of duties which he designs,—because it was not possible that he should make mention of all those which are necessary in our Christian course,—he fixes on them in particular which he knew were most necessary for the Hebrews to attend unto with diligence in their present circumstances; as we shall see in our consideration of them. And herein also ought he to be our example in the work of our ministry. Circumstances ofttimes make it necessary that some duties be more diligently pressed on our people than others, in themselves of no less importance than they.

3. His divine wisdom doth manifest itself in the intermixture of evangelical mysteries with his exhortation unto duties; whereby he both effectually presses the duties themselves, and manifests that the most mystical parts of divine truths and institutions are instructive unto duties, if rightly understood. The consideration hereof also we shall attend unto in our progress.

4. It doth so in that solemn prayer for a blessing on and due improvement of his whole doctrine; wherein he briefly comprises the sum and substance of the most mysterious truths, concerning the person, office, and sacrifice of Christ, which he had before insisted on; wherein, according to our ability, we ought to follow his example.

For the parts of this chapter, (the whole being hortatory,) they are these: 1. An injunction of, and exhortation unto, several duties of obedience; with especial enforcements given unto some of them, verses 1–6. 2. Unto faith, and stability therein, from the instrumental cause and especial object of it; with a

warning to avoid what is contrary thereunto, verses 7–12. 3. An exhortation, occasioned by what was spoken in confirmation of the preceding exhortation, unto self-denial and patient bearing of the cross, verses 13, 14. 4. A renewed charge of sundry duties, with respect unto God, their church-relation, one another, and himself, verses 15–19. 5. A solemn prayer for the complement of the blessed work of the grace of God in Christ towards them all, verses 20, 21. 6. The conclusion of the whole, in sundry particulars, verses 22–25.

In the first part, the duties exhorted unto are, (1.) Brotherly love, verse 1. (2.) Hospitality, verse 2. (3.) Compassion towards those that suffer for the gospel, verse 3. (4.) Chastity, with the nature and due use of marriage, verse 4. (5.) Contentment, with the grounds and reasons of it, verses 5, 6.

Hebrews 13: 1

Ἡ φιλαδελφία μενέτω.

Vulg. Lat., "charitas fraternitatis," "the love of the brotherhood;" not so properly. Syr., "love of the brethren." And unto μενέτω, both add, "in vobis," "in you." "Amor fraternus," "charitas fraterna." Μενέτω, "maneat;" that is, "constans maneat." Why it is thus enjoined, we shall inquire.

Ver. 1.—Let brotherly love continue, [abide constant.]

The duty commanded is "brotherly love;" and the manner of the injunction of it is, that it "remain," or "continue."

Ἡ φιλαδελφία. First, Love is the fountain and foundation of all mutual duties, moral and ecclesiastical; wherefore it is here placed in the head of both sorts, which are afterwards prescribed. And thereon the apostle immediately subjoins the two principal branches of it in duties moral, namely, hospitality and compassion; wherein he comprises all acts of mutual usefulness and helpfulness, instancing in such as principally stood in need of them; namely, strangers and sufferers.

All love hath its foundation in relation. Where there is relation there is love, or there ought so to be; and where there is no relation there can be no love, properly so called. Hence it is here mentioned with respect unto a brotherhood.

There is a threefold brotherhood, or fraternity:—1. Natural; 2. Civil; 3. Religious.

1. Natural brotherhood is either universal or more restrained.

(1.) There is a universal fraternity of all mankind: "God hath made of one blood all nations of men to dwell on all the face of the earth," Acts 17:26. Hence every one, by the law of nature, is every one's neighbour and every one's brother, his keeper and helper. Wherefore all strife, envy, hatred, wrong, oppression, and bloodshed among mankind, is of the evil one, 1 John 3:12. There is a love, therefore, due unto all mankind, to be exercised as opportunity and circumstances do require. We are to "do good unto all men," Gal. 6:10. And where this love is wanting in any, (as it is in the most,) there dwells no real virtue in that mind.

(2.) Again, this natural brotherhood is restrained; and that, [1.] With reference unto some stock or spring, from whence a people or nation did originally proceed, being therein separated from other nations or people. So there was a brotherhood among all the Israelites, who descended from the same common stock; that is, Abraham. Hence they esteemed themselves all brethren, and called themselves so: "My brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh," Rom. 9:3. So they are constantly called brethren in the law, in the prescription of duties unto them: "He is thy brother," etc. [2.] With respect unto a near stock, as the children of the same parents; which in the Scripture is constantly extended unto grandfathers also. Hence they are commonly in the Scripture called brethren and sisters who are descendants from the same grandfather or grandmother; on which account some are called the brethren of Jesus, Matt. 12:46, 47. The love required in this relation is known; but it is not here intended.

2. There is a civil fraternity. Persons voluntarily coalescing into various societies, do constitute a political brotherhood; but this hath here no place.

3. This brotherhood is religious. All believers have one Father, Matt. 23:8, 9; one elder Brother, Rom. 8:29, who is not ashamed to call them brethren, Heb. 2:11;—have one Spirit, and are called in one hope of calling, Eph. 4:4; which being a Spirit of adoption, interesteth them all in the same family, Eph. 3:14, 15, whereby they become "joint-heirs with Christ," Rom. 8:17. See the exposition on chap. 3:1. This is the brotherhood principally intended in the duty of love here prescribed. For although there was the natural relation also among these Hebrews, yet it was originally from their coalescency into one sacred society, by virtue of their covenant with God, that they became brethren of one family, distinct from all others in the world. And this relation was not dissolved, but further confirmed, by their interest in the gospel; whence they became "holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling," Heb. 3:1.

This brotherhood is the foundation of the love that is here enjoined; for "every one that loveth him that begat, loveth him also that is begotten of him," 1 John 5:1. It is not convenient to our purpose to insist long on the declaration of the nature of this grace and duty. It hath also been spoken unto in the exposition on chap. 6:10, 11. Here I shall observe some few things only concerning it, and they are those wherein it differs from the natural love, or that which hath only moral or civil motives or causes. For, (1.) The foundation of it is in gratuitous adoption: "Ye are all brethren, and one is your Father, which is in heaven," Matt. 23:8, 9. And it is by adoption that they are all taken into and made brethren in the same family, 1 John 3:1. (2.) It is a peculiar grace of the Spirit: "The fruit of the Spirit is love;" and therefore it is frequently, almost constantly, joined with faith in Christ Jesus, Philem. 5; 1 John 3:23. It is that which no man can have in nor of himself; it must be "given us from above." (3.) It is peculiar in its example; which is the love of Christ unto the church, 1 John 3:16; which gives it a different nature from all love that ever was in the world before. (4.) And it is so in the commandment, given for it by Christ himself, with the ends that he hath assigned unto it. He calls it his commandment in a peculiar manner, John 15:12, and thence "a new commandment," John 13:34; 1 John 2:7, 8; 2 John 5;—that wherein he will be owned above all others. And he designs the ends of it to be, the special glory of God, and an evidence unto the world that we are his disciples, John 13:35. (5.) It is so in its effects, both internal and external: such are pity, compassion, joy in prosperity, prayer, usefulness in all things, spiritual and temporal, as occasion doth re quire; patience, forbearance, delight, readiness to suffer for, and lay down our lives towards and for each other; which are all frequently inculcated and largely declared in the Scripture. And two things I shall only hence observe:—

Obs. I. That the power and glory of Christian religion are exceedingly decayed and debased in the world.—Next unto faith in Christ Jesus, and the profession thereof, the life and beauty of Christian religion consist in the mutual love of them who are partakers of the same heavenly calling, which all pretend unto. And this is that whereon the Lord Christ hath laid the weight of the manifestation of his glory in the world, namely, the love that is among his disciples; which was foretold as the peculiar glory of his rule and kingdom. But there are only a few footsteps now left of it in the visible church; some marks only that there it hath been, and dwelt of old. It is, as unto its lustre and splendour, retired to heaven, abiding in its power and efficacious exercise only

in some corners of the earth, and secret retirements. Envy, wrath, selfishness, love of the world, with coldness in all the concerns of religion, have possessed the place of it. And in vain shall men wrangle and contend about their differences in opinions, faith, and worship, pretending to design the advancement of religion by an imposition of their persuasions on others; unless this holy love be again introduced among all those who profess the name of Christ all the concerns of religion will more and more run into ruin.

The very name of a brotherhood amongst Christians is a matter of scorn and reproach; and all the consequents of such a relation are despised. But it is marvellous how any men can persuade themselves that they are Christians, and yet be not only strangers, but enemies unto this love.

Obs. II. Where the pretence of this love is continued in any measure, yet its nature is unknown, and its effects are generally neglected.—Such a love as arises from a joint interest in gratuitous adoption, powerfully infused into the mind and wrought in the heart by the Spirit thereof, effectually inclining unto its exercise, both internal and external, with a spiritual sense of a fraternal relation by the same new nature created in them all, of whom this love is required; extending itself not only unto all duties of mercy, bounty, compassion, and delight, but even unto the laying down of our lives for each other when called thereunto; is neither known by many nor much inquired after.

Μενέτω. Secondly, The manner of the prescription of this duty is, that it should "continue," or "abide constant;" which is peculiar. For he supposes that this love was already in them, already exercised by them; and he doth not therefore enjoin it, but only press its continuance. So he treateth them in like manner, chap. 6:9–12. And this insinuation or concession is of great force in the present exhortation. Men are free and willing to be pressed to continue in doing that which of themselves they have chosen to do. And it belongs unto ministerial wisdom, in exhortations unto duty, to acknowledge what is found of it already in them with whom they treat. For the owning of any duty is an encouragement due unto them by whom it is performed.

Besides, the apostle in this charge seems to give an intimation of the difficulty that there is in the preservation of this grace, and the performance of this duty. So the word is used, and so rendered by many, "to abide constant;" that is, against difficulties and temptations. It is not merely, 'Let it continue,' but, 'Take care that it be preserved;' for it is that which many occasions will be apt to weaken and impair. When men are first called into that relation which is

the foundation of this duty, they are usually warmly inclined unto it, and ready for its exercise; but in process of time innumerable occasions are ready to impair it; besides that those graces which are seated in the affections are apt of themselves to decay, if not renewed by fresh supplies from above. Against all those things which might weaken mutual love amongst them, the apostle gives them caution in this word, "Let it abide constant." And,—

Obs. III. We are especially to watch unto the preservation of those graces, and the performance of those duties, which in our circumstances are most exposed unto opposition. In particular,—

Obs. IV. Brotherly love is very apt to be impaired and decay, if we endeavour not continually its preservation and revival. This is evident in the sad event of things before mentioned. And,—

Obs. V. It is a part of the wisdom of faith to consider aright the ways and occasions of the decay of mutual love, with the means of its preservation. Without this we cannot comply with this caution and injunction in a due manner.

1. The causes of the decay of this love, whence it doth not continue as it ought, are, (1.) Self-love; (2.) Love of this present world; (3.) Abounding of lusts in the hearts of men; (4.) Ignorance of the true nature both of the grace and the exercise of it, in its proper duties; (5.) Principally, the loss of a concernment in the foundation of it, which is an interest in gratuitous adoption, and the participation of the same Spirit, the same new nature and life. Where this is not, though conviction of truth and the profession of it may for a season make an appearance of this brotherly love, it will not long continue.

2. The occasions of its decay and loss are, (1.) Differences in opinion and practice about things in religion; (2.) Unsuitableness of natural tempers and inclinations; (3.) Readiness to receive a sense of appearing provocations; (4.) Different, and sometimes inconsistent, secular interests; (5.) An abuse of spiritual gifts, by pride on the one hand, or envy on the other; (6.) Attempts for domination, inconsistent in a fraternity: which are all to be watched against.

3. The means of its continuance or preservation are, (1.) An endeavour to grow and thrive in the principle of it, or the power of adopting grace (2.) A due sense of the weight or moment of this duty, from the especial institution and command of Christ; and, (3.) Of the trial which is committed thereunto, of the sincerity of our grace and the truth of our sanctification; for by this we know that we are passed from death unto life: (4.) A due consideration of the use, yea

necessity, of this duty unto the glory of God and edification of the church; and, (5.) Of that breach of union, loss of peace, disorder and confusion, which must and will ensue on the neglect of it: (6.) Constant watchfulness against all those vicious habits of mind, in self-love or love of the world, which are apt to impair it: (7.) Diligent heed that it be not insensibly impaired in its vital acts; such as are patience, forbearance, readiness to forgive, unaptness to believe evil; without which no other duties of it will be long continued: (8.) Fervent prayer for supplies of grace enabling us thereunto: with sundry others of a like nature. And if we judge not this duty of such importance as to be constant in the use of these means for the maintenance of it, it will not continue.

The continuance of the church depends in the second place on the continuance of brotherly love. It doth so in the first place on faith in Christ Jesus, whereby we hold the Head, and are built on the Rock; but in the second place, it doth so on this mutual love. All other pretences about the succession and continuance of the church are vain. Where this faith and love are not, there is no church; where they are, there is a church materially, always capable of evangelical form and order.

It is not improbable but that the apostle might also have a respect unto the especial condition of those Hebrews. They had all relational foundations of mutual love among them from the beginning, in that they were all of one common natural stock, and were all united in the same sacred covenant for the worship of God. Hereon they had many divine commands for mutual love, and the exercise of all its effects, as became a natural and religious fraternity. Accordingly, they had an intense love towards all those who on these accounts were their brethren. But in process of time they corrupted this, as all other divine orders and institutions. For their teachers instructed them that the meaning of the command for mutual love did include a permission, if not a command, to hate all others. So they interpreted the law of love recorded Lev. 19:18, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy," Matt. 5:43. And the people practised accordingly, not thinking themselves obliged to show the least kindness unto any but their own countrymen. Hereon they grew infamous in the world. So Tacitus affirms of them: "Apud ipsos, fides obstinata, misericordia in promptu; adversus omnes alios hostile odium."—Hist. lib. v. And the satirist:

"Non monstrare vias eadem nisi sacra colenti,
Quaesitum ad fontem solos deducere verpos."—Juv. Sat. xiv. 103.

This horrible corruption and abuse of the law, which exposed them to reproach, whereas the due observance of it was their glory, our Saviour corrected as unto the doctrine of it, Matt. 5:43, 44; and rectified as unto its practice in the parable of the Samaritan, Luke 10:30, 31, etc. But yet their mutual love, on the grounds and reasons mentioned, was good, useful, and commendable. But whereas by the gospel their original brotherhood was as it were dissolved, the Gentiles being taken into the same sacred communion with them, some of them might suppose that the obligation unto mutual love which they were under before was now also ceased. This the apostle warns them against, giving in charge that the same love should still continue in all its exercise, but with respect unto that new fraternity which was constituted by the gospel.

Hebrews 13: 2

Τῆς φιλοξενίας μὴ ἐπιλανθάνεσθε· διὰ ταύτης γάρ ἔλαθόν τινες ξενίσαντες ἀγγέλους.

Φιλοξενίας. Syr., רַחֲמָתָא דְּאַכְסָנָיֵא, "the compassionate love of strangers." "Hospitalitatis," "hospitality." We have well rendered it, "to entertain strangers." Πολυξενία, is "a promiscuous entertainment of all,"—the keeping, as we call it, of an open house; ἀξενία, is "a defect in entertainment," through covetousness or roughness of nature; both condemned by the heathen: Μηδὲ πολύξεινον, μηδ ' ἀξεινον καλεέσθαι, Hesiod.

Ἔλαθον. Most copies of the Vulgar read "placuerunt;" which was put in by them who understood not the Grecism of "latuerunt," for "inscii," "unawares," not knowing (that is, at first) who they were whom they entertained.

The Syriac thus reads the whole verse: "Forget not love unto strangers; for by this some were worthy, when they perceived it not, to receive angels."

Ver. 2.—Be not forgetful [forget not] to entertain strangers; for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.

There are plainly in the words, first, A prescription of a duty; and, secondly, The enforcement of it by an effectual motive or reason.

And in the first there is, 1. The duty itself prescribed, which is to "entertain strangers;" and, 2. The manner of its prescription, "Forget not to do it;" be not forgetful of it.

Τῆς φιλοξενίας. 1. The duty prescribed is the "entertaining of strangers:" Φιλοξενία. The word is generally rendered by "hospitality;" and may well be so, if we consider the original of the word; but in its use it is somewhat otherwise

applied among us. For it respects such as are strangers indeed, and unknown unto us as unto other circumstances, and so such as really stand in need of help and refreshment; but with us it is applied unto a bountiful, and, it may be, profuse entertainment of friends, relations, neighbours, acquaintances, and the like.

The original word hath respect not so much unto the exercise of the duty itself, as to the disposition, readiness, and frame of mind, which are required in it and unto it. Hence the Syriac renders it, "the love of strangers," and that properly. But it is such a love as is effectual, and whose proper exercise consisteth in the entertainment of them; which comprises the help and relief which strangers stand in need of, and which is the proper effect of love towards them. Hence we render it, "to entertain strangers."

It is known what is meant by "entertainment;" even the receiving of them into our houses, with all necessary accommodations, as their occasions do require. In those eastern countries, where they travelled wholly or in part barefoot, washing of their feet, and setting meat before them, as also their lodging, are mentioned.

Strangers, even among the heathen, were counted sacred, and under the peculiar protection of God. So speaks Eumaeus unto Ulysses, when he entertained him as a poor unknown stranger:—

Ξεῖνϳ, οὐ μοι θέμις ἐστ', οὐδ' εἰ κακίων σέθεν ἔλθοι,
Ξεῖον ἀτιμῆσαι· πρὸς γὰρ Διὸς εἰσὶν ἅπαντες
Ξεῖνοί τε πτωχοί τε.—Hom. Odyss. 14:56.

"O stranger! it is not lawful for me, though one should come more miserable than thou art, to dishonour or disregard a stranger; for strangers and poor belong to the care of God."

And there was among some nations δίκη κακοξενίας, a punishment appointed for those that were inhospitable.

The Scripture frequently prescribes or commands this duty. See Deut. 10:19; Isa. 58:7; Matt. 25:35; Luke 14:13; Rom. 12:13; 1 Pet. 4:9; James 1:27.

This entertaining of unknown strangers, which was so great a virtue in ancient times, is almost driven out of the world by the wickedness of it. The false pretences 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 dreamed of any duty herein.

It is granted, therefore, that there is prudence and care to be used herein, that we be not imposed on by such as are unworthy of any entertainment. But it doth not follow that therefore we should refuse all who are strangers indeed; that is, whose circumstances we know not but from themselves.

It must also be acknowledged, that whereas provision is now made in all civilized nations for the entertainment of strangers, though at their own cost, things are somewhat in this case altered from what they were in the younger days of the world.

But there was a peculiar reason, taken from the then present circumstances of the church, especially of the Hebrews in their dispersions who belonged thereunto; whereon the apostle adjoins the prescription of this duty of entertaining strangers as the first branch of that brotherly love which he had before enjoined, as the first and most eminent way of its acting itself. For there were two things that made this duty more necessary than at other times. For the church was then under great persecution in sundry places, whereby believers were driven and scattered from their own habitations and countries, Acts 8:1. And hereon, following the direction of our blessed Saviour, when they were persecuted in one city, to flee unto another, they did so remove into other parts and places wherein they were strangers, and where there were for the present some peace and quietness. For God is pleased so to order things, in his holy, wise providence, that for the most part persecution shall not be absolutely at any time universal, but that there may be some places of a quiet retirement, at least for a season, unto them, or some of them, whose destruction is designed and endeavoured in the places of their own habitation. So, under the furious papal persecution in this nation in the days of Queen Mary, many cities and places beyond the seas were a refuge for a season unto them who fled from hence for the preservation of their lives. God in such cases makes a double provision for his church, namely, a refuge and hiding-place for them that are persecuted, and an opportunity for them that are at peace to exercise faith and love, yea, all gospel graces, in their helpful kindness towards them. And in case persecution at any time be universal (which state is at this time aimed at), and there be none to receive his outcasts, he himself will be their refuge and hiding-place: he will carry them into a wilderness, and feed them there, until the indignation be over-past. But in the state of the church wherein it was when the apostle wrote this epistle, those believers who were yet in peace and rest in their own habitations, had many obligations upon them to be ready to entertain strangers, who resorted unto them in their wanderings and distress.

Obs. I. Especial seasons are directions and constraining motives unto especial duties.—And he who on such occasions will forget to receive strangers, will not long remember to retain any thing of Christian religion.

Again; at that time there were sundry persons, especially of the converted Hebrews, who went up and down from one city, yea, one nation unto another, on their own cost and charges, to preach the gospel. "They went forth for the sake of Christ" (to preach the gospel), "taking nothing of the Gentiles," unto whom they preached, 3 John 7. And these were only "brethren," and not officers of any church, verse 5. The reception, entertainment, and assistance of these, when they came unto any church or place as strangers, the apostle celebrates and highly commends in his well-beloved Gaius, verses 5, 6. Such as these, when they came to them s strangers, the apostle recommends unto the love and charity of these Hebrews in a peculiar manner. And he who is not ready to receive and entertain such persons, will manifest how little concernment he hath in the gospel, or the glory of Christ himself.

Now, whereas this grace or duty in general is much decayed among the professors of Christian religion, we are greatly to pray, that, upon the returnal of the especial occasions of it, which lie at the door, yea, are entered in many places, it may be revived in the hearts and lives of all true believers.

Μὴ ἐπιλανθάνεσθε. 2. The manner of the prescription of this duty is expressed in that word, "Forget it not," be not unmindful of it; which is peculiar. Another duty, of the same nature in general with this, he gives in charge with the same expression, "Forget it not," verse 16. And he doth there confirm his injunction with a peculiar reason: "To do good and to communicate forget not; for with such sacrifices God is well pleased:" as here, "For thereby some have entertained angels" which intimates some peculiar concerns of these duties.

There is no doubt but that a positive command is included in the prohibition, "Forget not;" that is, "Remember." There are some duties whereunto our minds ought always to be engaged by an especial remembrance; and they are such, for the most part, against which either much opposition ariseth, or many pretences are apt to be used for a countenance of their omission. Such is the observation of the Sabbath, the institution and command whereof are prefaced with a solemn injunction to remember it. And three things seem to be respected in this expression:—

(1.) That we should endeavour to keep up our hearts in and unto a constant readiness for it. The word itself, φιλοξενία, respects more the frame of the mind and heart, their constant disposition unto the duty, than the actual discharge of it in particular instances. Unless the mind be preserved in this disposition, we shall fail assuredly in particular cases. "The liberal deviseth liberal things," Isa. 32:8. The mind is to be disposed and inclined habitually by the virtue of liberality, or it will not seek and lay hold on occasions of doing liberal things. And the reason why we find men so unready unto such duties as that here enjoined, is because they do not remember to keep their minds in a constant disposition towards them.

Obs. II. Our hearts are not to be trusted unto in occasional duties, if we preserve them not in a continual disposition towards them.—If that be lost, no arguments will be prevalent to engage them unto present occasions.

(2.) With respect unto surprisals. Seasons and occasions for this duty may befall us at unawares, and we may lose them before we are well composed to judge what we have to do. To watch against such surprisals is here given us in charge.

(3.) It respects a conquest over those reasonings and pretences which will arise against the discharge of this duty, when we are tried with especial instances. Some of them we have mentioned before, and others not a few will arise to divert us from our duty herein.

With respect unto these and the like difficulties or diversions, we are charged "not to forget," that is, always to remember, to be in a readiness for the discharge of this duty, and to do it accordingly; for which reason, also, the command is enforced by the ensuing encouragement. And we may observe, that,—

Obs. III. The mind ought continually to be upon its watch, and in a gracious disposition towards such duties as are attended with difficulties and charge; such as that here commanded unto us: without which, we shall fail in what is required of us.

The second thing in the words is the enforcement given unto the command, from the consideration of the advantage which some formerly had received by a diligent observance of this duty: "For thereby some have entertained angels unawares."

Διὰ ταύτης γάρ. "For thereby," 'for by this philoxeny;'—the virtue inclining and disposing the mind unto the entertainment of strangers is in the first place intended. 'And hereby some being in a readiness for the discharge of this duty, had the privilege of receiving angels under the appearance of strangers.' Had they not been so disposed, they had neglected the opportunity of so great divine grace and favour. So, the mind inlaid with virtue and grace, is equally prepared to perform duties, and to receive privileges.

Τινές. "Some" did so. This is usually referred unto Abraham and Lot, whose stories to this purpose are recorded, Gen. 18:1, etc., 19:1, etc. And there is no doubt but they are referred unto in an especial manner, as what they did is recorded expressly by the Holy Ghost. Yet I dare not ascribe it unto them alone, exclusively unto all others. For I question not but that in those ancient times, wherein God so much used the ministry of angels about the church, sundry other believers were visited by them "unawares" in like manner; as also, that they were disposed unto the receiving of this privilege by their readiness on all occasions to entertain strangers. But those instances left on the sacred record are sufficient unto the purpose of the apostle.

Now this reception of angels was a great honour unto them that received them; and so intended of God. And herein lies the force of the reason for diligence in this duty, namely, that some of them who were so diligent, had the honour, the favour, the privilege, of entertaining angels. Those angels stood in no need of their hospitality, nor did make any real use of the things that were provided for them; but they honoured them in a particular manner with their presence, and gave them thereby a pledge of the especial care and favour of God. How could they have any greater, than by sending his glorious angels to abide and confer with them? And both of them, upon this entertainment of angels, were immediately made partakers of the greatest mercies whereof in this life they were capable. And,—

Obs. IV. Examples of privileges annexed unto duties, (whereof the Scripture is full,) are great motives and incentives unto the same or the like duties.—For the motive used by the apostle does not consist in this, that we also, in the discharge of this duty, may receive angels, as they did; nor are we hereby encouraged to expect any such thing: but he shows hereby how acceptable this duty is unto God, and how highly it was honoured; whereon we may, in the discharge of the same duty, hope for divine approbation, in what way soever it seems good to God to signify it unto us.

Ἔλαθον. This they did "unawares." Of the meaning of the Greek phrase, and the corruption of the Vulgar Latin, reading "placuerunt" for "latuerunt," we have spoken before. It is observed, that at the appearance of these angels unto Abraham in the heat of the day, "he sat in the door of his tent," Gen. 18:1: and at their appearance unto Lot in the evening, "he sat in the gate of Sodom," where strangers were to enter, chap. 19:1. Probably both of them at those seasons had so disposed themselves on purpose, that if they saw any strangers, they might invite and receive them; whereon they did so on the first occasion that offered itself. And this also shows their readiness and disposition unto this duty, which they waited and sought occasion for.

This they did unawares, not knowing them to be angels;—that is, they did not so when first they invited and entertained them; for afterwards they knew what they were. But at first, both of them made such entertainments for them of bread and meat, as they knew well enough that angels stood in no need of.

And this may be laid in the balance against all those fears and scruples which are apt to arise in our minds about the entertainment of strangers, namely, that they are not so good as they appear or pretend to be, seeing some were so much better and more honourable than what at first they seemed to be.

And in some likeness hereunto, the poet, Odyss. P, after he hath discoursed sundry things excellently about poor and strangers, with the care of God over them, adds, as the highest consideration of them,—

Καί τε θεοὶ ξείνοισιν ἐοικότες ἀλλοδαποῖσι
Παντοῖοι τελέθοντες, ἐπιστρωφᾶσι πόληας,
Ἀνθρώπων ὑβριν τε καὶ εὐνομίην ἐφορῶντες.—Odyss. 17:485.

"The gods themselves, like unto wandering strangers, (seeing they are everywhere,) do come and visit cities, beholding what is done right or wrong among men."

Those that appeared unto Abraham are called "three men," because of the outward shape they had assumed, and the manner of their communication. Two of them were angels by nature, one of them by office only; for he was the Son of God: for he is called Jehovah, Gen. 18:1, 13, 17. And he deals with him in his own name, as unto the worship and covenant-obedience which he required of him, verses 17–19. And when the other angels departed, who entered Sodom at even, chap. 19:1, he continues still with Abraham: "But Abraham stood yet before the LORD," chap. 18:22. And all the passages between them were such,

that if a divine person be not openly avowed therein, we can have no assurance that God ever spake or transacted any of those things which are ascribed unto him in the Scripture, as the making of the world, and the like.

So Abraham entertained angels, two of them who were so by nature, and him who was then so by office; but when they appeared unto him, they are not in the Scripture called angels, though those two of them which came to Sodom are so, chap. 19:1.

Schlichtingius, to oppose the appearance of the Son of God in that place unto Abraham, takes great pains to confute an opinion, "That those three men were the three persons of the Trinity; and because Abraham spake unto one, that signified the unity of the divine essence in them all." The same notion doth Kimchi oppose on the place; so doth Enjedinus in his explications: which makes me think that some have expressed themselves unto that purpose. And indeed there are passages in some of the ancients intimating such a sense of the words; but it is universally rejected long ago. And by these men it is raised again, for no end but that they may seem to have something to say against the appearances of the Son of God under the old testament. Neither hath Schlichtingius here any one word but only exceptions against that opinion, which no man owns or defends. But it is plain, that he who appeared here unto Abraham, who also appeared unto Jacob, Moses, and Joshua, is expressly called Jehovah, speaks and acts as God, in his own name, hath divine works and divine worship assigned unto him, was adored and prayed unto by them unto whom he appeared; and in all things so carries it, in assuming all divine properties and works unto himself, as to beget a belief in them unto whom he appeared of his being God himself. And we may observe,—

Obs. V. Faith will make use of the highest privileges that ever were enjoyed on the performance of duties, to encourage unto obedience, though it expects not any thing of the same kind on the performance of the same duties.

Obs. VI. When men, designing that which is good, do more good than they intended, they shall, or may, reap more benefit thereby than they expected.

Hebrews 13: 3

The first branch of the exercise of brotherly love, enjoined verse 1, is towards strangers, verse 2; the next is towards sufferers, verse 3.

Ver. 3.—Μιμνήσκεσθε τῶν δεσμίων ὡς συνδεδεμένοι, τῶν κακουχουμένων, ὡς καὶ αὐτοί ὄντες ἐν σώματι.

Μιμνήσκεσθς, "mementote." Vulg., "memores estote," "be mindful of;" it is more than a bare remembrance that is intended.

Κακουχουμένων. Vulg., "laborantium," "of them that labour;" that is, under distresses. But the word is of the passive voice, and not well rendered by the active. "Eorum qui malis premuntur," Bez.; "malis afficiuntur;" that are pressed or affected with evils or sufferings. See chap. 11:37, where the same word is used in the same sense.

Ὡς καὶ αὐτοὶ ὄντες ἐν σώματι. Syr., "as men who are clothed with flesh;" not amiss. "Ac si ipsi quoque corpore afflicti essetis," Bez.; "as if ye yourselves were afflicted in the body:" which interpretation we must afterwards examine. "Tanquam et ipsi in corpore existentes," "as being yourselves in the body."

Ver. 3.—Remember [be mindful of] them that are in bonds, [or bound,] as bound with them; [and of] them which suffer adversity, [are pressed with evils,] as being yourselves also in the body.

This is the second branch of the duty of brotherly love, enjoined in the first verse: the first concerned strangers; this concerns sufferers. And because strangers are unknown as unto their persons, before the exercise of the duty of love towards them, the injunction respects the duty in the first place, "Forget not the duty of entertaining strangers." But sufferers were known, and therefore the immediate object of the command is their persons: "Be mindful of them that are bound, ... of them that suffer."

By "Them that are bound and suffer," not all that are so, or do so, are intended; there are those who are bound for their crimes, and suffer as evil-doers. There is a duty required towards them also, as we have occasion; but not that here intended by the apostle. They are those only which are bound and suffer for the gospel whom he recommends unto our remembrance in this place.

Those who then suffered for the gospel, (as it is now also,) were in a twofold outward condition. Some were in prisons, or bonds,—the devil had cast them into prison; and some were variously troubled, in their name, reputation, goods, and enjoyments,—some being deprived of all, all of some of these things. And so it is at this day. The apostle mentions them severally and distinctly, varying his charge concerning them, as the consideration of their several conditions was meet to influence the minds of those who did not yet so suffer unto their duty towards them, as we shall see.

In the first clause of the verse there is, 1. The object of the duty enjoined; that is, "those that are bound," or "in bonds." 2. The duty itself; which is, to be "mindful of them." And, 3. The manner of its performance; "as bound with them."

Τῶν δεσμίων. 1. The object of the duty required, is "those that are bound." The word signifies any that are in prison, whether they are actually bound with chains or no, because in those days all prisoners were usually so bound, Acts 16:26. To be thus "in bonds," or a prisoner, was esteemed a thing shameful, as well as otherwise penal; for it was the estate of evil-doers. But the introduction of a new cause made it an honourable title; namely, when any were made "prisoners of Christ," or "prisoners for Christ." So this apostle, when he would make use of a title of especial honour, and that which should give him authority among those with whom he had to do, so styles himself, and that emphatically, Eph. 3:1, Ἐγὼ Παῦλος ὁ δέσμιος τοῦ χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ,—"I Paul, vinctus ille, that prisoner of Christ Jesus;" and so again, chap. 4:1. See 2 Tim. 1:8; Philem. 9.

This kind of punishment for the profession of the gospel began early in the world, and it hath continued throughout all ages, being most frequent in the days wherein we live. But "the word of God," as the apostle speaks, "is not bound," 2 Tim. 2:9. The devil was never able by this means to obscure the light, or stop the progress of the gospel;—nor ever shall be so. He and his agents do but labour in vain. Men may, but the word of God cannot, be bound.

Those therefore that were in bonds, were all that were in prison for the profession of the gospel. And observe,—

Obs. I. Are we called unto this kind of suffering? let us not think strange of it, it is no new thing in the world.

Obs. II. Bonds and imprisonment for the truth were consecrated to God and made honourable by the bonds and imprisonment of Christ himself; and commended unto the church in all ages by the bonds and imprisonment of the apostles and primitive witnesses of the truth.

Obs. III. It is better, more safe and honourable, to be in bonds with and for Christ, than to be at liberty with a brutish, raging, persecuting world.

Μιμνήσκεσθε. 2. The duty enjoined with respect unto those that are bound is, that we "remember them," or "be mindful of them." It seems those that are at liberty are apt to forget Christ's prisoners, that they had need to be enjoined to be mindful of them; and for the most part they are so. And we are said to

"remember" them, as we are desired to "remember the poor;" that is, so to think of them as to relieve them according to our ability. It is better expressed by being "mindful of them," which carries a respect unto the whole duty required of us, and all the parts or acts of it. And they are many; I shall name the principal of them.

(1.) The first is care about their persons and concernments; opposed to that regardlessness which is apt to possess the minds of those that are at ease, and, as they suppose, free from danger. This the apostle commends in Phil. 4:10.

(2.) Compassion; included in the manner of the duty following, "As if ye were bound with them." This he commends in these Hebrews with respect unto himself, chap. 10:34, "Ye had compassion of me in my bonds." See the exposition. And this he enjoins them with respect unto others in the same condition. It is a great relief unto innocent sufferers, that there are those who really pity them, and have compassion on them, although they have no actual help thereby. And the want of it is expressed as a great aggravation of the sufferings of our Saviour himself, Ps. 69:20, "I looked for some to take pity, but there was none; and for comforters, but I found none."

(3.) Prayer; as it was in the case of Peter when he was in bonds, Acts 12:12. And indeed this is the principal way wherein we ought to be mindful of them that are in bonds; that which testifies our faith, sincerity, and interest in the same common, cause with them; which gives life and efficacy unto every other thing that we do in their behalf.

(4.) Assisting of them, as unto what may be wanting unto their relief, unto the utmost of our ability and opportunity. Those who are prisoners for the gospel do not usually suffer only in their restraint. Wants and straits, with respect unto their relations and families, do usually accompany them. To be mindful of them as we ought to be, is to supply their wants according to our ability.

(5.) Visiting of them is in an especial manner required hereunto; which the Lord Christ calls the visiting of himself in prison, Matt. 25:36, 43. And in the primitive times there were some designed to visit those who were in prison; which they did frequently unto the danger, sometimes unto the loss, of their lives.

These and the like duties, in particular, are contained in the present injunction. And it is a signal evidence of grace in the church, and in all professors in their particular capacities, when they are thus mindful of those

that are in bonds on the account of the gospel; as it is an argument of a hypocritical state, when men, being satisfied with their own liberties and enjoyments, are careless of the bonds of others. See 1 Cor. 12:25, 26. And,—

Obs. IV. Whilst God is pleased to give grace and courage unto some to suffer for the gospel unto bonds, and to others to perform their duty towards them, the church will be no loser by suffering.

Obs. V. When some are tried as unto their constancy in bonds, others are tried as unto their sincerity in the discharge of the duties required of them. And,—

Obs. VI. Usually more fail in neglect of their duty towards sufferers, and so fall from their profession, than do so fail under and on the account of their sufferings.

Ὡς συνδεδεμένοι. 3. We are thus to be mindful of them that are bound, "as bound with them." To be mindful of them, as bound with them, is an act of union with them. And this is threefold between suffering believers and those that are at liberty: (1.) Mystical; a union of conjunction in the same mystical body. Being both sorts members of the same body, when one suffers, the other doth so also, as the apostle disputes, 1 Cor. 12:25, 26. And this, some think, is intended peculiarly by the next clause, of "being in the body." But this union alone will not answer the expression; for men may be in the same body, and yet be neglective of their duty. (2.) A union of sympathy or compassion;—a union by spiritual affection, from a spiritual cognation. Hereby our minds are really affected with grief, sorrow, and trouble, at their sufferings, as if they were our own; as if we felt their chains, were restrained in their durance. (3.) A union of interest in the same cause. Those who are free are equally engaged in the same cause, in all the good and evil of it, with them that are in bonds. These things give us the measure of our suffering with others, the frame of our minds, and the principle of our acting toward them. Wherefore,—

To suffer with them that are bound, as if we were ourselves in bonds with them, requires, (1.) A union in the same mystical body, as fellow-members of it with them. (2.) The acting of the same common principle of spiritual life in them and us. (3.) A compassion really affecting our minds with that kind of trouble and sorrow which are the effect of suffering. (4.) A joint interest with them in the same common cause for which they suffer. (5.) A discharge of the duties towards them before mentioned. And where it is not thus with us, it

argues a great decay in the power of religion. And there are none who are more severely reflected on than those who are at ease while the church is in affliction, Ps. 123:4; Zech. 1:15.

Having given an especial instance of the exercise of brotherly love towards sufferers for the gospel, namely, the prisoners of Christ, towards whom especial duties are required; that we may not suppose our love and duty with respect unto suffering to be confined unto them alone, he adds unto them under the charge of our mindfulness, all that undergo evil, or trouble of any sort, for the profession of the gospel: "And of them which suffer adversity," etc.

And there is in the remaining words of this verse, 1. A designation of the persons in general whom we ought to be mindful of; and, 2. A motive unto the duty required of us.

1. The persons designed are "those that suffer adversity;" those that are vexed, pressed, troubled with things evil, grievous, and hard to be borne. For the word includes both the things themselves undergone,—they are evil and grievous; and the frame of men's minds in the undergoing of them,—they are pressed, vexed, and troubled with them.

The word is of a large signification, as large as we interpret it, "that suffer adversity;" extending itself unto all that is adverse or grievous unto us, as sickness, pain, losses, want and poverty, as well as other things. But it is here to be restrained unto those evils which men undergo for the profession of the gospel; and unto all sorts of them it is to be extended: such are reproaches, contempt, scorn, turning out of secular employments, spoiling of goods, stigmatizing, taking away of children, banishment,—every thing which we may undergo in and for our profession. Of all who are pressed or distressed with any of these we are enjoined to be "mindful," and that as unto all the ends and purposes before mentioned, according to our ability and opportunity. And by the distinction here used by the apostle between "those that are in bonds," and "those who suffer other adversities," yet both laid under the same charge as unto our remembrance, we are taught, that,—

Obs. VII. Although there are peculiar duties required of us towards those who suffer for the gospel in an eminent manner, as unto bonds, yet are we not thereon discharged from the same kind of duties towards those who suffer in lesser degrees, and other things. We are apt to think ourselves released from any consideration of sufferings seeming of an inferior nature, if it may be we have had regard unto some prisoners, or the like. And,—

Obs. VIII. Not only those who are in bonds for the gospel, or suffer to a high degree in their persons, are under the especial care of Christ, but those also who suffer in any other kind whatever, though the world may take little notice of them; and therefore are they all of them commended unto our especial remembrance.

Obs. IX. Professors of the gospel are exempted from no sorts of adversity, from nothing that is evil and grievous unto the outward man in this world; and therefore ought we not to think it strange when we fall into them.

Ὡς καὶ αὐτοὶ ὄντες ἐν σώματι. 2. The motive added unto the diligent discharge of the duty enjoined, is, that "we ourselves are also in the body." There is a threefold probable interpretation of these words. The first is, that by "the body," the mystical body of Christ, or the church, is intended. Whereas we are members of the same mystical body with them that suffer, it is just, equal, and necessary, that we should be mindful of them in their sufferings. This is the exposition of Calvin; and it seems to have great countenance given unto it by the discourse of the apostle unto this purpose, 1 Cor. 12:13, 26, etc., "Whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it." There is therefore a truth in this exposition, though I conceive it be not directly intended in this place. Another is that of Beza, both in his translation and annotations. For in his translation he adds to the text, for its exposition, "afflicti;"—'as if ye yourselves were afflicted in the body.' And he expounds it, "as if we suffered the same calamity." And he gives this reason of his interpretation, namely, that "whereas in the former clause we are enjoined to be mindful of them that are in bonds, as if we were bound with them; so in this, to be mindful of them that suffer adversity, as if we suffered in our own bodies with them." But neither do I think this reason cogent. For it is indeed those who are bound that suffer in the body in an especial manner; and in this latter exposition those are intended who suffer in any other way. Wherefore the common interpretation of the words is most suited unto the scope of the place: The apostle minds those who are yet at liberty, and free from troubles or afflictions, such as others are pressed and perplexed withal, of what is their own state and condition, namely, that as yet they are in the body; that is, in that state of natural life which is exposed unto the same calamities which others of their brethren do undergo. Whence is it that Satan and the world have this advantage against them, as to load, oppress, and vex them with all manner of evils, as they do? It is from hence alone, that they are yet in that state of being in this life natural which is subject and obnoxious unto all these sufferings. Were they once freed from the body, the

life which they lead in it in this world, none of these things could reach unto them, or touch them. 'Whereas, therefore, ye are yet in the same state of natural life with them, equally exposed unto all the sufferings which they undergo, be they of what kind they will, and have no assurance that ye shall be always exempted from them, this ought to be a motive unto you to be mindful of them in their present sufferings.' And this is the sense of the place. And we may observe from hence,—

Obs. X. That we have no security of freedom from any sort of suffering for the gospel whilst we are in this body, or during the continuance of our natural lives.—"Ante obitum nemo." Heaven is the only state of everlasting rest Whilst we have our bodily eyes, all tears will not be wiped from them.

Obs. XI. We are not only exposed unto afflictions during this life, but we ought to live in the continual expectation of them, so long as there are any in the world who do actually suffer for the gospel.—Not to expect our share in trouble and persecution, is a sinful security, proceeding from very corrupt principles of mind, as may be easily discovered on due examination.

Obs. XII. A sense of our own being continually obnoxious unto sufferings, no less than those who do actually suffer, ought to incline our minds unto a diligent consideration of them in their sufferings, so as to discharge all duties of love and helpfulness towards them.

Obs. XIII. Unless it do so, we can have no evidence of our present interest in the same mystical body with them, nor just expectation of any compassion or relief from others, when we ourselves are called unto sufferings.—When we are called to suffer, it will be a very severe self-reflection, if we must charge ourselves with want of due compassion and fellow-suffering with those who were in that condition before us.

These are some instances of the acts and duties of that brotherly love which is required among Christians; that love which is so much talked of, so much pretended unto, by some who would have it consist in a compliance with all sorts of men, good and bad, in some outward rites of religion, unto the ruin of it, which is almost lost in the world.

Hebrews 13: 4

Τίμιος ὁ γάμος ἐν πᾶσι, καί ἡ κοίτη ἀμίαντος· πόρνους δὲ καὶ μοιχοὺς κρινεῖ ὁ Θεός.

Ὁ γάμος, "conjugium," "connubium;" "marriage," "wedlock," the state of it.

Ἐν πᾶσι. Syr., בְּכָל, "in omnibus." Bez., "inter quosvis," "inter omnes;" so is ἐν commonly used for "inter."

Κοίτη, "thorus," "cubile." Syr., וְעַרְמְחוּן, "et cubile eorum," "and their bed." For so it reads this sentence, "Marriage is honourable in all, and their bed דַּכְיָא חֵי," "is pure, undefiled:" which, as I judge, well determines the reading and sense of the words.

Πόρνους. Vulg., "fornicators;" Bez., "scortatores;" which we render "whoremongers," not amiss. The difference between them and μοιχούς we shall see.

Κρινεῖ. Syr., דָּאֵן, "judicat;" "judicaturus est, judicabit," "damnabit," Bez.; Arab., "Marriage is every way honourable, and the bed thereof is pure."

Ver. 4.—Marriage [is] honourable in all, and the bed undefiled; but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.

There is a double difficulty in the translation of the words of the first proposition, arising from a double defect in the original. The first is of the verb substantive, or the copula of the proposition; which some supply by ἐστι, "is;" others by ἐστω, "let it be," or be accounted. The other is from the defect of the noun substantive, which πᾶσι, "all," refers unto: some supply "men," in all sorts of men; others, "things," or every manner of way. For the first, the most of late incline to make it preceptive, and not judicative; "Let it be," "let it be so esteemed." We follow Beza, and render it indicatively; "it is,"—"Marriage is honourable."

The sole reason used by any for the former interpretation is, that the duties mentioned both before and after are expressed preceptively, by way of command, in words imperative, and there is no reason why this should be inserted in another form. The Vulgar supplies not the defect in the original: and our Rhemists render the words from thence, "Marriage honourable in all;" but in their annotations contend for the preceptive sense, "Let marriage be honourable in all;" hoping thereby to shield their tyrannical law of celibate from the sword of this divine testimony,—but in vain. Neither is the reason which others plead of any force for this exposition. For the other duties mentioned are such as were never by any called in question, as unto their nature, whether they were universally good or no; nor ever were like so to be. There was no need, therefore, to declare their nature, but only to enjoin their practice. But it was otherwise in the case of marriage, for there always had been, and there were then, not a few, both of the Jews (as the Essenes) and of the Gentiles, who

had unworthy thoughts of marriage, beneath its dignity, and such as exposed it to contempt. Besides, the Holy Ghost foresaw, and accordingly foretold, that in the succeeding ages of the church there would arise a sort of men that should make laws prohibiting marriage unto some, 1 Tim. 4:3; wherefore it was necessary that the apostle, designing to give unto the Hebrews a charge of chastity and purity of life, should give a just commendation of the means that God had ordained for the preservation of them. And the following words, wherein "the bed undefiled" is entitled unto the same honour with "marriage," can have no just sense without a relation to the verb in the present tense, as it is accordingly expressed in the Syriac translation.

The truth is, the apostle opposeth this blessed declaration of the truth unto some principles and practices that were then current and prevalent in the world. And these were, that marriage was at least burdensome and a kind of bondage unto some men, especially a hinderance unto them that were contemplative; and that fornication at least was a thing indifferent, which men might allow themselves in, though adultery was to be condemned. In opposition unto these cursed principles and practices, the apostle, designing to commend and enjoin chastity unto all professors of the gospel, declares on the one side, the honourable state of matrimony, namely, from divine institution; and on the other, the wickedness of that lasciviousness wherein they allowed themselves, with the certainty of divine vengeance which would befall them who continued therein. There was just reason, therefore, why the apostle should insinuate the prescription of the duty intended by a declaration of the honour of that state which God hath appointed for the preservation of men and women in chastity.

And this leads us unto the supply of the other defect, "in all." The preposition ἐν, applied unto persons, is constantly used in the New Testament for "inter" or "among:" "among all,"—that is, all sorts of persons; or as Beza, "inter quosvis." And it will be granted, that if the words be taken indicatively, this must be the sense of them. And persons are here to be taken restrictively, for those who duly enter into that state. The apostle doth not assert that marriage was a thing in good reputation among all men, Jews and Gentiles; for as with some it was, so with others it was not: but he declares that marriage is honourable in all sorts of persons, who are lawfully called thereunto, and do enter into it according to the law of God and righteous laws among men. For by a defect herein it may be rendered highly dishonourable in and unto men, as will appear in the ensuing exposition of the words.

From a prescription of duties towards others, the apostle proceeds to give directions unto those wherein our own persons and walking are concerned. And he doth it in a prohibition of the two radical, comprehensive lusts of corrupted nature, namely, uncleanness and covetousness; the first respecting the persons of men in a peculiar manner, the other their conversation. The first, in all the acts of it, is distinguished from all other sins, in that they are immediately against a man's self, in his own person: "Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth" (which is perpetrated in external acts) "is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body," 1 Cor. 6:18. And the other influenceth and corrupts all duties of life whatever.

His manner of the injunction of the first duty in this verse is peculiar, for the reasons before mentioned. And it consists of two parts: 1. A commendation of the remedy of the evil prohibited, which is marriage; 2. A condemnation of the sins prohibited, with a denunciation of divine judgments against them. And he takes this way of insinuating the necessity of the duty prescribed, 1. Because the remedy was by some despised; and by others, who were called unto the use of it, neglected. 2. Because the sins prohibited were thought by many not so highly criminal; and if they were, yet usually were shaded in secrecy from punishment among men. Without the removal of these prejudices, his exhortation could not obtain its due force in the minds of them concerned.

In the first place, we have a proposal, 1. Of a state of life; that is, "Marriage." 2. Of the duties of that state; "The bed undefiled." And of them both it is affirmed, that they are "honourable."

Ὁ γάμος. 1. The first is "marriage." It is that which is lawful and according to the mind of God which is intended; for there may be marriages, or such conjunctions for the ends of marriage between men and women, so called, that are highly dishonourable. It must be marriage of two individual persons, and no more, according to the law of creation and divine institution (polygamy was never honourable); marriage not of persons within the degrees of consanguinity laid under divine prohibition (incest being no less dishonourable than adultery); marriage in a concurrence of all necessary circumstances both of mind and body in them that are to be married,—such are, power over their own persons, freedom in choice or consent, personal mutual vow or contract, natural meetness for the duties of marriage, freedom from guilt as to the persons intended, and the like. Wherefore, taking marriage for a conjunction of a man and woman, by mutual consent, for all the ends of human life, and it cannot be absolutely pronounced "honourable;" for there may be many things

in such a conjunction rendering it sinful and vile. But that marriage is so, which, on the ground and warranty of divine institution, is a "lawful conjunction of one man and one woman, by their just and full consent, into an indissoluble union (whereby they become one flesh), for the procreation of children, and mutual assistance in all things, divine and human."

As the apostle speaks of this marriage in general, as unto its nature and use, so he hath an especial respect unto it in this place as it is the means appointed and sanctified of God for the avoiding and preventing of the sins of fornication and adultery, and all other lusts of uncleanness, which without it the generality of mankind would have rushed into like the beasts of the field.

Τίμιος. And this marriage he affirms to be "honourable." It is so on many accounts, and so it is to be esteemed. It is so, (1.) From the consideration of the Author of it, him by whom it was originally appointed; which is God himself, Gen. 2:18, 23, 24, Matt. 19:5; and all his works are "honourable and glorious," Ps. 111:3. (2.) From the manner of its institution, being expressed as a peculiar effect of divine wisdom and counsel for the good of man, Gen. 2:18, "And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone: I will make him an help meet for him." Greater honour could not be put on this institution and state of life. (3.) From the time and place of its institution. It is co-equal with mankind; for although Adam was created in single life, yet he was married in the instant of the production of Eve. Upon the first sight of her he said, "This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh," verse 23: which she complying with, was the formal cause of their matrimony. And it was in paradise, whilst man and woman were in the state of innocency and beauty: so foolish is the law in the church of Rome prohibiting marriage unto their ecclesiastics, on pretence of an unsuitableness in it unto their holiness; as though they were more pure than our first parents in paradise, where they entered into their married estate. (4.) From the many tokens or pledges of divine favour, communicating honour unto it. God first married and blessed Adam and Eve himself, Gen. 2:22, 23. He gave laws for the regulation of it, verse 24; Matt. 19:5. He had especial respect unto it in the decalogue; yea, all the commands of the second table arise from and have respect unto this institution. He by his law excluded from all administration of office in the congregation those that were not born in lawful wedlock, Deut. 23:2, etc. And the Lord Christ approved of all these things by his presence at a lawful marriage, and a feast thereon, John 2:1–11. (5.) It is so from the use and benefit of it. The writings of all sorts of wise men, philosophers, lawyers, and Christian divines, have elegantly expressed these things. I shall only say, that as

the legitimate and orderly continuation of the race of mankind depends hereon, and proceeds from it, so whatever is of virtue, honour, comeliness or order, amongst men; whatever is praiseworthy and useful in all societies, economical, ecclesiastical, or political, it depends hereon, and hath regard hereunto. To all unto whom children are dear, relations useful, inheritances valuable, and acceptation of God in the works of nature preferred before sordid uncleanness and eternal ruin; this state is, and ought to be, accounted honourable to them.

Ἐν πᾶσι. The apostle adds, that it is thus "honourable in all;" that is, amongst all sorts of persons that are called thereunto. 'There is no sort, order, or degree of men, by reason of any calling, work, or employment, but that marriage is an honourable state in them, and unto them, when they are lawfully called thereunto.' This is the plain sense of the words, as both their signification and occasion in this place do manifest. Some had rather it should be, "in all things," or "every manner of way;" or "in all ages, at all times;"—none of which do here suit the mind of the apostle. For whereas his design is to give direction for chastity and universal purity of life, with the avoiding of all sorts and degrees of uncleanness, and whereas the proneness unto such sins is common unto all, (though cured in some by especial gift,) he declares that the remedy is equally provided for all who are called thereunto, 1 Cor. 7:9, as not having received the gift of continency, at least as unto inward purity of mind, without the use of this remedy. However, if it should be rendered "in all things," or "every manner of way," the popish celibate can never be secured from this divine testimony against it. For if it be not lawful to call that common which God hath declared clean, is it lawful for them to esteem and call that so vile as to be unmeet for some order or sort of men among them, which God hath declared to be "honourable in all things," or every manner of way? The reader may, if it be needful, consult the writings of our divines against the Papists, for the confirmation of this exposition. I shall only say, that their impiety in their law imposing the necessity of single life on all their ecclesiastics, wherein they have usurped divine authority over the consciences of men, hath been openly pursued by divine vengeance, in giving it up to be an occasion of the multiplication of such horrid uncleannesses as have been scandalous unto Christian religion, and ruinous to the souls of millions. In other persons they make matrimony a sacrament; which, according to their opinion, conferreth grace, though well they know not what: but it is evident, that this law of forbidding it unto their

clergy, hath deprived them of that common gift of continence which other men, by an ordinary endeavour, may preserve or attain unto. But it belongs not unto my present purpose to insist on these things. And we may observe,—

Obs. I. That divine institution is sufficient to render any state or condition of life honourable.

Obs. II. The more useful any state of life is, the more honourable it is. The honour of marriage ariseth much from its usefulness.

Obs. III. That which is honourable by divine institution, and useful in its own nature, may be abused and rendered vile by the miscarriages of men; as marriage may be.

Obs. IV. It is a bold usurpation of authority over the consciences of men, and a contempt of the authority of God, to forbid that state unto any which God hath declared "honourable among all."

Obs. V. Means for purity and chastity not ordained, blessed, nor sanctified unto that end, will prove furtherances of impurity and uncleanness, or worse evils.

Obs. VI. The state of marriage being honourable in the sight of God himself, it is the duty of them that enter thereinto duly to consider how they may approve their consciences unto God in what they do. And,—

Obs. VII. A due consideration of their call unto it, of their ends in it, that they are those of God's appointment, prayer for, and expectation of his blessing on it, reverence of him as the great witness of the marriage covenant, with wisdom to undergo the trials and temptations inseparable from this state of life, are required hereunto.

Κοίτη ἀμίαντος. 2. Unto the state of marriage the apostle adds the consideration of the duties of it, in that expression, "The bed undefiled." The word κοίτη is three times used by our apostle;—once for the conception of seed in the marriage-bed, Rom. 9:10; once for excess in lustful pleasures, Rom. 13:13, where we render it "chambering;" and here for the place of marriage duties, "torus," "lectum," "cubile." Its commendation here is, that it is "undefiled." And two things are intended herein: (1.) An opposition unto the defiled beds of whoremongers and adulterers, from the honourable state of marriage. The bed of marriage is pure and undefiled, even in the duties of it. (2.) The preservation of marriage duties within their due bounds; which the apostle giveth directions about, 1 Thess. 4:3–7; 1 Cor. 7:2–5. For there may be many pollutions of the marriage bed, not meet here to be mentioned; and there are some dilated on in

the popish casuists, which are not fit to be named among Christians, nor could have been believed, had they not divulged them from their pretended penitents. But that which we are here taught is, that,—

Obs. VIII. Conjugal duties, regulated by the bounds assigned unto them by natural light, with the general rules of Scripture, and subservient unto the due ends of marriage, are honourable, giving no cause of pollution or shame.

From this state and use of marriage, the means appointed of God for the preservation of the purity and chastity of our persons, the argument is cogent unto diligence in our duty therein, and the aggravation great of the contrary sins. For whereas God hath provided such a way and means, for the satisfaction of natural inclination, the procreation of children, and comfort of life in mutual society, as are honourable, and as such approved by himself, so as no way to defile the body or mind, or to leave any trouble on the conscience; who can express the detestable wickedness that is in the forsaking of them, in a contempt of the authority and wisdom of God, by men's seeking the satisfaction of their lusts in ways prohibited of God, injurious to others, debasing and defiling to themselves, disturbing the whole order of nature, and drowning themselves in everlasting perdition, which the apostle declares in the next words?

Secondly, Having confirmed the exhortation unto personal purity or holiness, and chastity, included in the words, from the commendation of the state and duties whereby they may be preserved, with assurance of divine acceptation therein, he further presseth it by a declaration of the contrary state and opposite vices of those who, despising this only remedy of all uncleanness, or not confining themselves thereunto, do seek the satisfaction of their lusts in ways irregular and prohibited.

This opposition of the two states and acts is declared in the particle δέ, "but:" 'So it is with marriage and its duties; but as unto others, it is not so with them.' And, 1. He declares who are the persons that transgress the rule prescribed, who are of two sorts, (1.) Whoremongers; (2.) Adulterers. 2. He declares their state with respect to God, and what will be their end; "God will judge" or condemn them.

Πόρνους καὶ μοιχούς. 1. The distinction between "whoremongers," or fornicators, and "adulterers," is allowed by all to be between single persons, and those that are both or one of them in a married state. The sin of the first is fornication; of the other, adultery. And although πορνεύω and πορνεία may

sometimes be used to denote any kind of uncleanness in general, and so to comprise adultery also; yet wherever these words are put together, as they are often, they are so to be distinguished, as the one of them to signify fornication, and the other adultery, Matt. 15:19; Mark 7:21; Gal. 5:19. And for the most part, when πόρνος and πορνεία are used alone, they denote precisely the sin of unmarried persons, or at least where the woman is so: that we call fornication, Heb. 11:31; James 2:25; Acts 15:20; 1 Cor. 6:18; Eph. 5:3; Col. 3:5; 1 Thess. 4:3. Wherefore πόρνοι, which we render here "whoremongers," as distinguished from adulterers, are persons who in single or an unmarried state of life do know one another carnally, whether it be by single acts or a frequent repetition of them, by the means of cohabitation, without a marriage vow or covenant between them.

Some have fallen into that impudence in our days, as to countenance themselves with the opinion and practices of some of the heathen, who thought that this sin of fornication was no sin, or a matter not much to be regarded. But as it is contrary unto the law of creation, and consequently the light of nature, being a filthy spring of other evils innumerable; so it is expressly condemned in the Scripture, as Deut. 23:17, 1 Cor. 6:18, Col. 3:5, and in the other places before cited. And this one place, where it is said to render men obnoxious to eternal damnation, is enough to determine this case in the minds of men not flagitiously wicked. And shall we suppose, that that religion which condemneth the inward lust of the heart after a woman, without any outward act, as a sin worthy of judgment, doth give countenance, or doth not most severely condemn, the actual abomination of fornication?

But whatever may be the judgment of any men, or whatever they may pretend so to be, (for I am persuaded that no man can so far debauch his conscience, and obliterate all impressions of Scripture light, as really to think fornication to be no sin, who thinks there is any such thing as sin at all,) yet the practice of multitudes in all manner of licentiousness this way at present among us, can never sufficiently be bewailed. And it is to be feared, that if magistrates, and those who are the public ministers in the nation, do not take more care than hitherto hath been used, for the reproof, restraint, and suppressing of this raging abomination, divine judgments on the whole nation on the account of it will speedily satisfy men's scruples whether it be a sin or no.

For "adulterers," who are mentioned in the next place, there is no question amongst any about the heinousness of their sin; and the common interest of mankind keeps up a detestation of it. But it is here, together with fornication,

reserved in a peculiar manner unto divine vengeance: (1.) Because for the most part it is kept secret, and so free from human cognizance; and, (2.) Because, although the divine law made it capital, or punishable by death, as did also some laws among the heathens themselves, yet for the most part it ever did, and doth still, pass in the world under a less severe animadversion and punishment. But,—

2. Whatever such persons think of themselves, or whatever others think of them, or however they deal with them, God will judge and condemn them.

Κρινεῖ. "God will judge," or "damnabit;" he will "condemn," he will damn them. It is the final judgment of the last day that is intended; they shall not be acquitted, they shall not be absolved,—they shall be eternally damned. And there is included herein,—

Obs. IX. Whatever light thoughts men may have of sin, of any sin, the judgment of God concerning all sin, which is according to truth, must stand for ever.—To have slight thoughts of sin, will prove no relief unto sinners.

Obs. X Fornication and adultery are sins in their own nature deserving eternal damnation.—If the due wages of all sin be death, much more is it so of so great abominations.

Obs. XI. Men living and dying impenitently in these sins shall eternally perish; or, a habitual course in them is utterly inconsistent with any spark of saving grace. See 1 Cor. 6:9, 10; Eph. 5:5; Rev. 21:8, 22:15.

And there is an emphasis in the expression, "God will judge;" wherein we may see, (1.) That the especial aggravation of these sins doth expose men unto a sore condemnation in a peculiar manner, 1 Cor. 3:17, 6:16–19. (2.) All occasions of, all temptations leading unto these sins, are to be avoided, as we take care of our souls. (3.) Although the state of men may be changed, and divine wrath due to these sins may be finally escaped by repentance, yet it may be observed, that of all sorts of sinners, those who are habitually given up unto these lusts of the flesh, are the most rarely called, and brought to effectual repentance. Yet, (4.) Many of those persons, by reason of their convictions, received in the light of a natural conscience, do live in a kind of seeming repentance, whereby they relieve themselves after some acts of uncleanness, until by the power of their lust they are hurried again into them. But I must not here further discourse these things.

Hebrews 13: 5, 6

Ἀφιλάργυρος ὁ τρόπος, ἀρκούμενοι τοῖς παροῦσιν· αὐτὸς γὰρ εἴρηκεν, Οὐ μή σε ἀνῶ, οὐδ᾽ οὐ μή σε ἐγκαταλίπω, ὥστε θαῤῥοῦντας ἡμᾶς λέγειν, Κύριος ἐμοὶ βοηθὸς, καὶ οὐ φοβηθήσομαι τὶ ποιήσει μοι ἄνθρωπος.

Ἀφιλάργυρος. Syr., לָא הֲוָא רָחֵם כַּסְפָּא, "let not [your mind] be loving of silver;" "love not silver," according to the original signification of the word; but its use is of larger extent, "sine avaritiâ, alieni ab avaritiâ;" "not inclined unto, alien from covetousness."

Ὁ τρόπος. Syr., רַעֲיוֹנְכוֹן, "your mind;" as τρόπος doth sometimes signify "ingenium, animum, mentem, indolem," the mind with its bent and inclination. Other interpreters render it by "mores," and supply "vestri;" "your manners," 'the way and manner of your conversation:' as it is well rendered by ours, "your conversation;" though that be properly ἀναστροφή, which we render "conversation," verse 7; but we have no other word whereby to express the force of the Latin "mores." Τρόπος is men's "moral conversation," or their conversation in morals. So we read χρηστὸς τρόπος, "honest manners," an honest conversation; and βέλτιστος τρόπος, "excellent manners;" and τρόπος δίκαιος, "a just, righteous conversation;" and τρόπος ὅσιος, "holy manners;" and on the contrary, πικρὸς τρόπος, "bitter, froward manners."

Ver. 5, 6.—[Let your] conversation [be] without [free from] covetousness; [and be] content with [present things] such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord [is] my helper, and I will not fear what man can do unto me.

From particular duties, the apostle proceeds unto that which is more general, which relates unto our whole course of walking before God. And the vice prohibited is frequently joined with that foregoing, fornication and covetousness, Eph. 5:3, 5; Col. 3:5; 1 Thess. 4:6: not that they have any especial affinity one with the other, but that they are both of them such as corrupt the whole Christian profession.

There is in the words, 1. A duty prescribed: 2. An enforcement of it from its reason and cause: 3. An inference from that reason, in an application of it unto all cases wherein the duty is required; the two latter consisting in two divine testimonies, one concerning the promises of God, the other concerning the experience of believers.

1. The duty is enjoined, (1.) Negatively, "Let your conversation be without covetousness;" (2.) Positively, "Be content with such things as ye have." Covetousness and contentment are absolutely opposite, and inconsistent in the same mind.

(1.) As unto the manner of expression in the negative precept, it is in the original doubly defective, "Conversation without covetousness;" which we well supply with "your," and "let it be;" which is the intention of the words. And we must inquire, [1.] What is our "conversation." [2.] How it ought to be "without covetousness."

Ὁ τρόπος. [1.] The word here used may be taken in a threefold sense: 1st. For the mind, or the frame and inclination of it in its acting about the things of this life. So it is rendered by the Syriac, "Let your mind." And respect must be had hereunto, because the evil prohibited is a vice of the mind, and the opposite grace a virtue of the mind. 2dly. For accustomed practice; 'Live, act, trade, do all things without covetousness.' 3dly. For the way, and manner, and course we use and take in the getting of a livelihood, or food and raiment. And all these significations of the word are consistent, nor can any of them be excluded from the sense of the place. We render it by "conversation," which is comprehensive of them all. But it is in this place alone thus used. The word which in all other places we render "conversation," is ἀναστροφή, Gal. 1:13; Eph. 4:22; 1 Tim. 4:12; James 3:13, etc.: but the same is plainly here intended, though the word yields somewhat a larger sense than the other.

Wherefore, our "conversation" here includes both the frame of our minds and the manner of our acting, as unto the morality of it, in all that we do about the things appertaining unto this life. And because of this restraint of it unto our actings about the things of this life, the apostle useth this word τρόπος, "mos" or "mores," and not ἀναστροφή, which expresseth our "universal walk before God," in all holy obedience, Phil. 1:27, 3:20; James 3:13; 1 Pet. 1:15; 2 Pet. 3:11.

Ἀφιλάργυρος. [2.] The ordering of our conversation aright in this matter is of great importance in our Christian profession. And for the direction of it the apostle gives this rule, that it be "without covetousness." The word is only once more used in the New Testament, 1 Tim. 3:3, "Not covetous;" as that which it denies is twice, Luke 16:14, 2 Tim. 3:2; in both which places we render it "covetous." Φιλαργυρία, the substantive, we render according to its original signification, "the love of money," 1 Tim. 6:10. The word used constantly in the New Testament for "covetousness" is πλεονεξία, Mark 7:22; Rom. 1:29; 2 Cor. 9:5;

Eph. 5:3; Col. 3:5; 1 Thess. 2:5. But whereas (as the wise man tells us) "money answereth all things," Eccles. 10:19, and is therefore the peculiar object of covetous desires, "covetousness" and "the love of money" are the same. Wherefore the word here, being "without the love of money," is well rendered by "without," or "alien from covetousness."

Covetousness is an inordinate desire, with a suitable endeavour, after the enjoyment of more riches than we have, or than God is pleased to give unto us; proceeding from an undue valuation of them, or love unto them. So it is described by our apostle, 1 Tim. 6:9, 10.

A vice this is which, by its effects, manifests itself always to be contrary to the light of nature, as debasing the minds of men, making them useless, and exposing them to all manner of vile practices. Hence it was always stigmatized by sober heathens, as one of the vilest affections of the minds of men. And there is nothing which the Scripture doth more severely condemn, nor denounce more inevitable punishment unto. Two places in our apostle may suffice to confirm it. In the one he tells us, that "covetousness is idolatry," Col. 3:5;—that is, such an abominable sin, as there is no name fit to be given unto it but that which intimates a rejection of God himself; or, it may be, respect is also had unto the minds of covetous persons, who even adore their money, and put their trust in it in the stead of God. "The rich man's riches are his strong tower." The other is 1 Tim. 6:9, 10, where he affirms that it gives men present perplexing anxieties of mind, and plungeth them into eternal perdition.

But hereof there are many degrees. Where it is predominant, the Scripture doth absolutely exclude those in whom it is from life and salvation, amongst the most profligate of sinners. But there may be, and are, lesser degrees of inordinate desires after earthly things, which partake of the nature of this vice, that may abide in believers themselves, and are a subject of mortification all their days. And these inclinations, according to their degree, are obstructive of duties, and means of exposing men unto various temptations at all times, especially in those of persecution. And the apostle seems to have respect here unto such a season. For when men are spoiled of some of their goods, and in danger of losing all, it is apt to stir up in them earnest and inordinate desires after somewhat more than they have, and not to be contented with what is present; which the apostle here declares to be covetousness. This he would have us free from at all times, especially in the times of persecution; which that he hath respect unto, the sixth verse doth plainly declare. And we may hereon observe sundry things; as,—

Obs. I. All covetousness is inconsistent with a Christian conversation, according to the gospel.—It is to be alien in all things from covetousness. Neither is there any thing at this day that doth more stain the glory of our Christian profession. For in the profligate lives of debauched persons, their blasphemies, adulteries, drunkenness, and the like, religion is not concerned. They openly avow themselves to have no interest in it; neither hath that any in them. But whereas covetous men, from the predominancy of that one lust, do ofttimes keep themselves from open sins of the flesh, and withal make a profession of religion, having "a form of godliness," this vice is a high reproach to their profession.

Obs. II. Covetousness in any degree is highly dangerous in a time of persecution, or suffering for the gospel.—It is with respect unto such a season that we are here warned against it. For there is no sin which so intimidates the spirit, and weakens all resolution, in a time of suffering, as this doth. For sufferings generally in the first place fall on that wherein its power and interest do lie, namely, the riches and possessions of men; whence they are filled with fears about them, disanimating them in all their resolutions. And it constantly riseth up against seasonable duties at such a time; such as contribution unto the wants of other sufferers. It is always accompanied with a distrust of God, as we shall see afterwards, and fixeth the soul in an over-valuation of earthly things; which is directly opposite unto the exercise of all grace whatever. It fills the soul at such a season with anxiety and disquietment of mind, piercing it through with many sorrows, with equal hopes and fears, irregular contrivances for supply, and reserves of trust in what men have, with other evils innumerable.

Ἀρκούμενοι. (2.) In opposition hereunto, we are directed and enjoined to be "content with things that are present," or "such things as we have." Ἀρκέω and the passive are "to suffice," "to be sufficient," to be that which is enough, Matt. 25:9; John 6:7. The passive is used here, and 1 Tim. 6:8; to be content or satisfied with what is sufficient in earthly things: whose measure the apostle gives there to consist in "food and raiment." Αὐτάρκεια is once used to the same purpose; which signifies, not a self-sufficiency, but a satisfaction in ourselves, as to what we have, 1 Tim. 6:6. So also is αὐτάρκης, which we render "content," Phil. 4:11; that is, satisfied in our condition.

This is that which the apostle opposeth unto that covetousness which he doth condemn; and they are inconsistent in the same mind, in any prevalent degree. The assertion of the one denies the other; and so on the contrary. Wherefore this contentment is a gracious frame or disposition of mind, quiet

and composed; without, [1.] Complaining or repining at God's providential disposals of our outward concerns; [2.] All envy at the more prosperous condition of others; [3.] Fears and anxious cares about future supplies; and, [4.] Desires and designs of those things which a more plentiful condition than what we are in would supply us withal.

Τοῖς παροῦσιν. And this contentment is with respect unto "such things as we have;" or "things that are present," as it is in the original. Now, things present are not here opposed unto things that are future; as though we should be content with them, and not look after the future reward: but they are opposed unto things which are not present with us in our present state and condition, though so they might be; and therefore, as unto the sense, it is rendered by, "such things as ye have." Yet are not "things" only intended, but in general the state and condition wherein we are, be it of poverty, or affliction, or persecution, or of more enlargement in earthly things. So it is declared by our apostle, Phil. 4:11, "I have learned ἐν οἷς εἰμὶ, αὐτάρκης εἶναι," "in whatever state I am," say we, "therewith to be content;"—'in the condition and circumstances wherein I am, whether it be of abounding or need,' as he explains it in the next verse. And it respects the things that are present with us, such things as we have; namely, for the use of this natural life. And the measure of them, in ordinary cases, is food and raiment, as the rule is given us, 1 Tim. 6:8, "Having food and raiment, let us be therewith content:" not that we are allowed to be discontented if we want them; but that these are such a sufficiency as are a rational obligation unto contentment,—a man need seek no further. But among other evils that we may undergo for the gospel, we may be called unto "hunger and nakedness," Rom. 8:35; by which many witnesses of Christ have been destroyed. And when we are so, we are obliged to be therewithal content also. For contentation, or satisfaction of mind, in things present, doth not arise from, nor depend on, any measure, great or small, of the things themselves which we do enjoy, but on the presence of God with us, and the reward that is therein, as the next words declare.

And it may not be impertinent to observe some few things for the declaration of the virtue of it; as,—

[1.] Contentment with what we have is not exclusive of honest industry, to make an addition unto it, and so enlarge the provision of earthly things for ourselves and our families. Honest industry, even unto this end, is the command of God, who hath given us six days in seven for the exercise of it. Wherefore,—

[2.] It doth not consist in a slothful neglect of the occasions of this life; nor in a pretended apathy or regardlessness of them; nor in the relinquishment of an industrious course of life, to betake ourselves unto monastic idleness, under a pretence of contempt of the world; but,—

[3.] It is a gracious disposition of mind, arising solely from trust in and satisfaction with God alone, against all other things whatever that may appear to be evil, as the next words declare.

[4.] It is utterly exclusive, 1st. Of covetousness, or an inordinate inclination of mind and desire after an increase of our present enjoyments, with all the ways and means whereby they usually act themselves; 2dly. Of all anxious care, distrust of things future, or complaints of things present; 3dly. Of that foolish elation of mind, and contempt of others, which riches give unto men of weak minds; for contentment is a grace in the rich as well as in the poor.

[5.] It is opposed in this place unto, and is a remedy of, a double evil: 1st. Of distress and distrust under an apprehension of want; 2dly. Of despondency under oppression, persecution, and suffering the things that men can do unto us, or bring upon us. And both these evils arise from covetousness, or an inordinate desire after and valuation of earthly things.

2. Having prescribed the duty, the apostle adds an enforcement of its practice, from the cause which renders it just and reasonable: "For he hath said," etc. This is from something that was said or spoken to this purpose: concerning which he proposeth, (1.) Who spake it; (2.) What he spake; wherein is included the consideration of him to whom he spake it, and when, and with reference unto what occasion.

Τάρ. (1.) "He hath said." That this is causal, as unto the duty proposed, is declared in the conjunction "for:" 'Do so, "for he hath said."' He nameth not the person that spake; but by the way of eminency calleth him "He." אַתָּה הוּא, —"Thou art He," Ps. 102:28; which the apostle renders Σὺ αὐτὸς εἶ, Heb. 1:12. "Thou art He," is a name of God;—He who alone hath all being and existence in himself; He who with us, as in himself, is "all, and in all." Αὐτὸς ἔφα was an ascription of honour to a man: but this αὐτὸς εἴρηκεν is infinitely above it. And hereby the apostle refers us to the greatness and power of God. 'HE who is over all, the supreme disposer of all things in heaven and earth, in whose hand and power are all the concerns of men, who can do whatever he pleaseth, He hath said it.' For,—

Obs. III. All the efficacy, power, and comfort of divine promises, arise from, and are resolved into, the excellencies of the divine nature. He hath said it who is truth, and cannot deceive: He who is almighty, etc.

Οὐ μή σε ἀνῶ, οὐδ᾽ οὐ μή σε ἐγκαταλίπω. (2.) What he hath said unto this purpose: "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." It is observed by all, that there is a vehement negation in the last clause, by a multiplication of the negative particles, οὐδ᾽, οὐ, μή, as two of them are used in the former. And the design hereof is, to obviate all objections which fear and unbelief may raise against the assurance given, from such circumstances as men may fall into: 'Be they what they will, I will not at any time, on any occasion, for any cause, leave thee, nor forsake thee.' In these negative expressions positive blessings are contained, and those distinct also, as the expressions are. By the first, the continuance of God's presence is intended; by the other, the continuance of his help, which the apostle takes notice of in the next verse: ' "I will not leave thee;"—whatever be thy state and condition, I will never withdraw my presence from thee: "I will never forsake thee," or suffer thee to be helpless in any trouble; my aid and help shall be continued with thee.' Only these things are expressed negatively, directly, and immediately, to obviate the fears which in difficult trials believers are apt to be exercised withal; and they are the principal way of the secret working of unbelief. Wherefore, the vehemency of the expression, by the multiplication of the negative particles, is an effect of divine condescension, to give the utmost security unto the faith of believers in all their trials. That God doth design in general so to do, our apostle declares at large, chap. 6:17, 18, whereon see the exposition.

Obs. IV. Divine presence and divine assistance, which are inseparable, are the spring and cause of suitable and sufficient relief and supplies unto believers in every condition.

Obs. V. Especially, the due consideration of them is abundantly sufficient to rebuke all covetous inclinations and desires, which without it will be prevalent in us in a time of straits and trials.

Whereas these words contain a promise made of old unto some or other, we must inquire into the circumstances of it, as unto whom it was made, and when, and on what occasion.

There is a promise to this purpose, yea in these very words, given unto Solomon by David, in the name of God: "The LORD God, even my God, will be with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee," 1 Chron. 28:20. And it is

found frequently repeated unto the church, as unto the substance of it. See Isa. 41:10–13. But it is generally granted that it is the promise which God made unto Joshua when he gave him in charge the great work of destroying the enemies of the church in the land of Canaan. So are the words of God unto him expressly, Josh. 1:5, "I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee." The words, indeed, were used by Moses unto Joshua before, Deut. 31:6, 8; where the translation of the LXX. is much the same with the words used by the apostle in this place: but whereas the apostle refers the words spoken immediately to the speaking of God himself, "For he hath said," they are taken from that place in the Book of Joshua, where God speaks directly unto him; and not from that in Deuteronomy, which are the words of Moses.

Now this promise was personal, and given unto Joshua on the account of that great and difficult undertaking which he was called unto, in the conquest of Canaan. It is not therefore easily to be understood how an application may be made of it unto every individual believer, in all their straits and trials. To clear this difficulty, we may observe,—

[1.] That the dangers and difficulties which every believer has to undergo in his spiritual warfare, especially in times of trial and persecution, are no less than those that Joshua conflicted withal in his wars, nor do stand in less need of the especial presence and assistance of God to overcome them than his did. And therefore, in using these words unto Joshua, God did but expressly declare, for his encouragement, how he will deal with all believers, in every state and condition that he calls them unto.

[2.] The faith of all believers stands in need of the same supportment, the same encouragement with that of Joshua, and is resolved into the same principles with his, namely, the presence and assistance of God. Wherefore,—

[3.] All the promises made unto the church, and every particular member of it, for the use of the church, are made equally unto the whole church, and every member of it, in every age, according as the grace and mercy of them is suited unto their state and condition. There was in many of the promises of old something of especial privilege (as in that of a kingdom to David) and somewhat that respected circumstances, and the state of the people in the land of Canaan, wherein we are only analogically concerned; but as unto the grace, love, and mercy of God in them all, with their accommodation unto all our cases and necessities, they belong unto all believers, no less than they did unto them unto whom they were first given and made. Hence,—

[4.] Faith sets every believer in the room or place of him or them unto whom the promises were originally made; and as they are recorded in the Scripture, wherein God continues to speak unto the church, they are spoken directly unto every one of them. So the apostle here declares it: ' "He hath said," that is, unto you, and every one of you unto whom I speak, "I will never leave thee;" ' which is the ground of the inference which he makes in the next verse. Yea,—

[5.] Whereas those promises which contained especial privileges, (as those made to Abraham and David), and those which respected the interest of the people in the land of Canaan, did proceed from, and were enlivened by, the love and grace of God in the covenant made with the church, or all believers, every one of them may apply unto themselves the same love and grace, to be acted suitably unto their condition, by mixing those promises with faith. For if "whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scripture might have hope," as Rom. 15:4, much more are the promises recorded therein for our use and benefit.

There hath not been in our days a more desperate attempt against the life of religion, and the whole covenant-relation between God and the church, than that whereby the application of the promises recorded in the Scripture unto the present state, condition, and wants of believers, hath been opposed and ridiculed. But faith will triumph over such foolish and impious assaults.

In brief, all the promises recorded in the Scripture, being nothing but ways and means of the exhibition of the grace of the covenant, which is made with the whole church, with all believers, and the accommodation of it unto their state, condition, and occasions; being all in the ratification of the covenant made "yea and amen in Christ Jesus, unto the glory of God by us;" they do equally belong unto all believers, and what God says in any of them, he says it unto every one that doth truly believe.

Herein, then, lieth the force of the apostle's argument: That if God hath said unto every one of us, what he said unto Joshua, that he will never leave us as to his presence, nor forsake us as to his assistance, we have sufficient ground to cast away all inordinate desires of earthly things, all fears of want, and other pressures, to rest quiet and contented with his undertaking for us.

3. This inference, from this promise given unto us, the apostle declares in the next verse, confirming it with the experience of David; which was not peculiar unto him, but is common to all believers.

Ver. 6.—"So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me."

We may every one of us say as David did in the like case; for he so spake in confidence of the same promise of the presence and assistance of God, which is given also unto us. The words are taken from Ps. 118:6, "The LORD is on my side, (for me, my helper;) I will not fear what man can do unto me." To the same purpose the psalmist speaks, Ps. 56:3, 4, 11; only for "man," verse 4, he useth the word "flesh,"—"what flesh can do unto me;" with a great contempt of all the power of his adversaries.

He confirms his argument by a divine testimony; wherein we may consider both the manner of its introduction, and the testimony itself.

(1.) The former is in these words, "So that we may boldly say;" or, "So as that we are bold to say;" or, "We do boldly say;" or have right so to do: the verb being of the infinitive mood, may be limited either of these ways.

Ωστε. "So that," or "so as that;"—a note of inference, or collection of one thing out of another. 'By what is said to us, we are enabled and justified thus to say ourselves.'

Θαῤῥοῦντας ἡμᾶς. "Boldly;"—'We being bold, using confidence, may say.' This the apostle ascribes to us herein, [1.] Because it is evident that David, in uttering those words, did use a more than ordinary boldness and confidence in God. For he spake them first in a time of great distress, "when the Philistines took him in Gath," and his enemies were continually ready to "swallow him up," Ps. 56:1, 2. In the midst of this distress, with great confidence he expresseth his trust in God, and says, "I will not fear what flesh can do unto me," Ps. 56:4. And in the same state he was, Ps. 118:6–10. The like confidence in the like condition is required of us. [2.] Because an act of high trust and confidence in God is required unto the profession here expressed. The word signifies the frame of mind that is in valiant men when they are preparing with shouts to engage against their adversaries. [3.] To intimate our duty on this occasion; which is, to cast out all fears, every thing that may intimidate our spirits, or disquiet our minds, or hinder us from making a cheerful profession of our confidence in God. For that is required of us. Λέγειν. We are to "say" what we believe, to profess it; yea, to glory and make our boast in God, against all opposition. Wherefore,
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Obs. VI. The cheerful profession of confidence in God, against all opposition, and in the midst of all distresses, is that which believers have a warrant for in the promises that are made unto them.

Obs. VII. As the use of this confidence is our duty, so it is a duty highly honourable unto the profession of the gospel. "Degeneres animos timor arguit."

In the application of this testimony, as taken from Ps. 56:4, the apostle supposeth that David spake these words not merely in his own person, and with respect unto his own case, or the especial promises he had about it, but in the person of the whole church, or on the general right of all true believers. For it is the word of God, or the promises therein contained, which are common to all believers, which was the ground of what he said or professed. So the words in the beginning of the verse do testify, "In God I will praise his word." He would give unto him the glory of his truth and power, by believing. Wherefore,—

Obs. VIII. Believers having the same grounds of it that he had, may use the same confidence that he did.—For outward circumstances alter not the state of things as unto faith or duty. We may use the same confidence with him, though our case be not the same with his. And,—

The apostle, in the application of this testimony, extends the case which he at first applies his exhortation unto. For at first he speaks only with respect unto want and poverty; but here he compriseth in it persecution and oppression, which usually are the causes of distressing want and poverty.

(2.) These things being premised, we may proceed to inquire what is in the testimony itself produced, unto the end of the apostle's exhortation. And we may consider,—

[1.] That there is an opposition, a conflict, a contest, between distinct parties, supposed in the words. And the persons concerned immediately herein, are believers on the one hand, and man on the other; whereon a third person, namely, God himself, interposeth, and becometh a party in the contest. For,—

[2.] God is herein on the side of the church; "The Lord is my helper;" 'a helper unto me.' Respect seems to be had in this expression unto Ps. 118:6, 7; though the words also of Ps. 56 are intended. And there are two ways whereby the psalmist asserts this matter: 1st. יְהוָה לִי, verse 6, ' "The LORD is unto me, for me, on my side," (as we render it,) in this contest.' 2dly. יְהוָה לִי בְּעֹזְרָי, verse 7, say we, "The LORD taketh my part with them that help me;" 'the LORD is for me among the helpers.' Both these the apostle compriseth in this one, ἐμοὶ βοηθός, "he is my helper." Wherein the help of God in this case consists, we shall show

immediately. In the meantime, it is certain that believers do stand in need of help in that contest which they have with the world. Of themselves they are not able to go through it with success. Yet have we no reason to fear an engagement in what is above our strength or ability, when we have such a reserve of aid and assistance; but in whatever befalls us, "we may say boldly, We will not fear." For if God be on our side, "if God be for us, who shall be against us?" Let who so will be so, it is all one, the victory is secured on our side.

Τί ποιήσει μοι ἄνθρωπος. [3.] There is a double opposition in the words, giving an emphasis unto the sense of the whole; 1st. Between God and man. "The LORD is on my side; I will not fear what man can do." And this "man" he calls "flesh," Ps. 56, "what flesh can do." 2dly. Between what God will do, "He will help;" and what men can do, expressed in the psalm by an interrogation in way of contempt, "What can flesh do to me?" that is, 'whilst God is my helper.'

[4.] This help of God, which believers are assured of in their trials, and under their persecutions, is twofold. 1st. Internal, by supplies of grace, spiritual strength, and consolation, enabling them with a victorious frame of mind to go through all the difficulties and dangers of their conflict with a certain success; 2dly. External, in actual deliverance, by the destruction of their adversaries: both which are frequently exemplified in the Scripture, and present experience.

[5.] There is a double contempt cast on the adversaries of the church: 1st. From their state: they are but "man,"—"what man can do;" which he calls "flesh" in the psalm,—a poor, contemptible, dying worm, compared with the eternal, infinitely powerful God. 2dly. From his power: "What can he do?" whatever his will and his desires may be, in his power he is weak and impotent. And that which we are taught from hence is,—

Obs. IX. That all believers, in their sufferings, and under their persecutions, have a refreshing, supporting interest in divine aid and assistance.—For the promises hereof are made unto them all equally in their suffering state, even as they were unto the prophets and apostles of old. And,—

Obs. X. It is their duty to express with confidence and boldness at all times their assurance of the divine assistance declared in the promises, to their own encouragement, the edification of the church, and the terror of their adversaries, Phil. 1:28.

Obs. XI. Faith duly fixed on the power of God as engaged for the assistance of believers in their sufferings, will give them a contempt of all that men can do unto them.

Obs. XII. The most effectual means to encourage our souls in all our sufferings, is to compare the power of God who will assist us, with that of man who doth oppress us.—So is it prescribed by our blessed Saviour, Matt. 10:28.

Obs. XIII. That which in our sufferings delivereth us from the fear of men, takes out all that is evil in them, and secures our success.

Hebrews 13: 7

From a prescription of the foregoing duties of morality, and obedience in them, the apostle proceeds unto those which concern faith and worship, laying the foundation of them in that respect which is due unto them that declare unto us the word of truth, for their work's sake, and on the account of the example which they give unto us.

Ver. 7.—Μνημονεύετε τῶν ἡγουμένων ὑμῶν, οἵτινες ἐλάλησαν ὑμῖν τὸν λόγον τοῦ Θεοῦ· ὧν ἀναθεωροῦντες τὴν ἔκβασιν τῆς ἀναστροφῆς μιμεῖσθε τὴν πίστιν.

Ἡγουμένων. Vulg., "praepositorum." Rhem., "your prelates;" but yet they interpret the words of saints departed, with such a usual inconsistency as prejudice and interest produce. Syr., "your leaders;" "ductorum," "ducum." We, "them that have the rule over you;" as indeed the word is sometimes used to express rule; but it is not proper unto this place, wherein the apostle speaks of them who are departed this life; and so, whatever they had, they have not still the rule over us.

Ἀναθεωροῦντες, "intuentes," "contemplantes," "considerantes;" "looking into." Ἔκβασιν, "quis fuerit exitus," "exitum;" "the end," "the issue," what it came to. The Syriac puts another sense on the words, "Search out the perfection of their conversation;" but to the same purpose.

Ver. 7.—Remember your guides, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of [their] conversation.

That which the apostle designs in the following discourse, is perseverance in the faith and profession of the truth, in opposition unto an infection with, or inclination unto "various and strange doctrines," as he expresseth it, verse 9. And this, in the first place, he commends unto them from the formal cause of it, or the word of God; and the instrumental cause of it in them, which is the

preaching of it, and those that taught it. For this is the method of believing, faith cometh by hearing; hearing by the word of God; and the word of God by them that are sent to preach it, Rom. 10:14–17.

The duty prescribed hath a threefold object, or there are three distinct parts or considerations of its object: 1. The persons of some men, their "guides." 2. Their "faith;" 3. Their "conversation," with "the end of it." And so there are three distinct parts of the duty respecting them distinctly: 1. To "remember them," or their persons. 2. To "imitate their faith." 3. To "consider the end of their conversation."

Τῶν ἡγουμένων ὑμῶν. 1. We must consider who are the persons intended. Our translation makes them to be their present rulers, "Them which have the rule over you." So Erasmus, "Eorum qui vobis praesunt." But it is an evident mistake. That which seems to have led them into it is, that ἡγούμενος is a participle of the present tense. But it is most frequently used as a noun; and so it is here. But that their present rulers cannot be here intended, is evident, (1.) Because there is another precept given with respect unto them afterwards, verse 17, and that in words suited unto the duty which they owe them whilst alive and present with them: "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves." (2.) He describes them as those which had formerly spoken unto them the word of God, and not as those who yet continued so to do. (3.) They were such as had received ἔκβασιν ἀναστροφῆς, "the event and end of their conversation" in this world.

Ἡγέομαι is duco, arbitror, existimo; "to think, to esteem," or "to judge:" and so it is constantly used in the New Testament. But it also signifies praesum, praeeo, duco; "to go before," "to rule," "to lead." And ἡγούμενοι is variously used: sometimes for a ruler, Matt. 2:6. Acts 7:10: sometimes for a principal person among others; so Judas and Silas are called ἄνδρας ἡγουμένους ἐν τοῖς ἀδελφοῖς, Acts 15:22,—"chief men among the brethren;" which one would have to be bishops over them, very absurdly, for they are reckoned among those brethren of the church who were distinguished from the apostles and elders: and sometimes for them that are chief in any work; so it is said that Paul, when he spake with Barnabas, was ὁ ἡγούμενος τοῦ λόγου, "the chief speaker," Acts 14:12,—who was chief or forwardest in speaking. It is used in this chapter only, verses 7, 17, 24, for an officer or officers in the church;—that is, such as go before, who guide and direct the church; which is the nature of their office. That is, bishops, pastors, elders, that preside in the church, guide it, and go before it; for they have such a rule as consists principally in spiritual guidance.

By the description following, it is evident that the apostle intends all that had spoken or preached the word of God unto them, whether apostles, evangelists, or pastors, who had now finished their course; not with any respect unto James, as some think, for he was yet alive, as appears, chap. 12:4. Nor doth the apostle, in this case of retaining the truth, give any direction for peculiar regard to Peter, much less to his chair or successors; but unto all that had spoken the word of God unto them.

Μνημονεύετε. 2. What it is so to remember them, to be mindful of them, to bear them in our minds and memories. And this is done two ways: (1.) Naturally; to retain them in our minds, as those whom we highly value and prize. So we are commanded to bear ourselves towards them whilst they are alive; namely, to "esteem them very highly in love, for their work's sake," 1 Thess. 5:13. And the same respect we are to have for them when they have finished their work. Suddenly to forget them, is an evidence that we have not profited by their labours as we ought to have done. (2.) It is to retain them in our minds morally, with respect to the ends here mentioned. A bare remembrance of them is of little or no use. But to remember them in what they did and taught, so as to follow them in their faith and conversation, this is a duty of no small advantage unto us.

In process of time the latter of these, namely, to remember them so as to follow them in their faith and holiness, was much lost among the professors of the Christian religion. But the former was retained, and new ways invented for the continuation of it, which ended in various superstitions. For there were found out unto this end certain religious celebrations of the supposed times of their deaths, with assemblings at their tombs; wherein they placed much devotion, not without a great mixture of heathenish rites; which issued at length in prayer, adoration, and sundry acts of religious worship. But no such thing is here enjoined;—no prayers for them nor to them; no dedications of temples or altars unto their memory; no preservation, much less adoration, of their relics or bones, nor ascription of miraculous cures or operations unto them; yea, the apostle, limiting the end of our remembrance of them unto our imitation of their faith and holiness, doth sufficiently condemn all these superstitions.

Obs. I. This, therefore, is our best, this is our only way of remembering them who have been our guides, leaders, and rulers, in the church, whether they have been apostles, or evangelists, or ordinary pastors, namely, to follow them in their faith and conversation. And,—

Obs. II. This ought to be the care of the guides of the church, namely, to leave such an example of faith and holiness, as that it may be the duty of the church to remember them, and follow their example. Alas! how many have we had, how many have we, who have left, or are likely to leave, nothing to be remembered by, but what it is the duty of the church to abhor! how many whose uselessness leads them into everlasting oblivion!

Οἵτινες ἐλάλησαν ὑμῖν τὸν λόγον τοῦ Θεοῦ. 3. The apostle gives the character of the persons whom he would have them remember; and they are "those who had spoken to them the word of God." This is the characteristical note of church guides or rulers. Those who do not labour herein unto the edification of the church, let them pretend what they will, are no such guides or rulers, nor are so esteemed by Christ or the church; nor is the remembrance of them any duty.

The "word of God" in this place, is the written word, and what is contained therein. Probably some parts of the Scripture, as the epistles of John, and the second of Peter, and certainly the Revelation, were written after this epistle. But what was then written was a sufficient, and the sole rule of faith unto the church. Yet I will not deny but that the vocal speaking of the word of God, by virtue of new revelations in them who were divinely inspired, as the apostles and evangelists, may be comprised herein. And whereas the word of the gospel is principally intended, this speaking may comprise the apostolical writings as well as their vocal preaching. For in and by them they spake, that is, delivered and declared unto them, the word of God, 1 Thess. 2:13. What they wrote, what they taught, by divine revelation, what others taught out of their writings and other scriptures, is this word of God.

Obs. III. This word of God is the sole object of the faith of the church, the only outward means of communicating the mind and grace of God unto it. Wherefore upon it, the being, life, and blessedness of the church do depend.—And it is that alone that is to be spoken in and unto it, in all things appertaining unto faith, obedience, or worship, even the whole discipline of Christ. To speak of traditions, canons of councils, human institutions of any sort, unto the church, belongs not unto them who have the rule of it. This they are confined unto in their whole work; nor is the church obliged to attend unto them in any thing else.

As they preached nothing but the word of God, so the expression intimates their diligence therein. They "gave themselves unto prayer and the word." And this is the ground, the cause of the respect that is due from the church unto its

guides, and this alone; namely, that they have diligently, carefully, and constantly, spoken the word of God unto them, and instructed them in the way of life thereby.

Ὧν μιμεῖσθε τὴν πίστιν. 4. This remembrance of our guides is prescribed with reference unto the duty of following their faith: "Whose faith follow;"—'So mind them and their work, in preaching the word of God, as to follow or imitate them in their faith.'

Μιμέομαι is "to imitate;" that is, lively to express an example proposed unto us. And it is the word used by the apostle unto that end which we translate "to follow," 2 Thess. 3:7, 9; as μιμητής is constantly for the person performing that duty, which we render a "follower," 1 Cor. 4:16, 11:1; Eph. 5:1; 1 Thess. 1:6, 2:14; Heb. 6:12. So the word is applied unto painting, when one picture is exactly drawn by another, so as in all things to represent it. Hence one wrote under his excellent piece, Μωμήσεταί τις μᾶλλον ἢ μιμήσεται,—"It is easier to envy it than to imitate it," or do the like. So poets and players are said μιμεῖσθαι, "to imitate" the persons whom they represent; and the more accurately they do it, the more exact are they esteemed in their arts. I mention it only to show that there is more intimated in this word than "to follow" in the usual sense seems to express. It is such a following as wherein we are fully conformed unto, and do lively express, that which we are said so to follow. So a scholar may be said to follow his master, when, having attained all his arts and sciences, he acts them in the same manner as his master did. So are we to follow the faith of these guides.

Their faith may be considered two ways: (1.) Objectively, for the faith which they taught, believed, and professed, or the truth which they did believe. (2.) Subjectively, for the grace of faith in them, whereby they believed that truth. And it is here taken in the latter sense; for their faith in the other sense is not to be imitated, but professed. Nor doth the apostle, by their faith, intend only the grace of faith in them, but its whole exercise, in all that they did and suffered. Their faith was that which purified their hearts, and made them fruitful in their lives. Especially, it was that whereby they glorified God in all that they did and suffered for the name of Jesus Christ. Wherefore saith the apostle, 'Remember them; and in so doing, remember their faith, with what it enabled them to do and suffer for the gospel,—their faith in its principle, and all the blessed effects of it.' In the principle, this faith is the same, as unto the nature of it, in all true believers, whether they are rulers or under rule, 2 Pet. 1:1. But it differs in its

fruits and effects. In these they were eminent. And therefore are the Hebrews here enjoined to secure it in its principle, and to express it in its exercise, even as they did.

Herein are we to imitate and follow them. No mere man, not the best of men, is to be our pattern or example absolutely, or in all things,—this honour is due unto Christ alone; but they may be so, we ought to make them so, with respect unto those graces and duties wherein they were eminent. So the apostle proposeth himself as an example to believers, 1 Cor. 4:16; Phil. 3:17; 1 Thess. 1:6: but with this limitation, as he followed Christ, 1 Cor. 11:1. And,—

Obs. IV. A due consideration of the faith of those who have been before us, especially of such who were constant in sufferings, above all, that were so unto death, as the holy martyrs in former and latter ages, is an effectual means to stir us up unto the same exercise of faith, when we are called unto it. And if the imitation of former ages had kept itself within these bounds, they had been preserved from those excesses whereby at length all the memory of them was corrupted and polluted.

Ἀναθεωροῦντες τὴν ἔκβασιν τῆς ἀναστροφῆς. 5. The last thing in the words, is the motive that the apostle gives unto this duty of following their faith; which ariseth from the consideration of the "end of their conversation," or what, through their faith, they came or were brought unto. 'They have,' saith he, 'finished their course in this world.' What was their "conversation," what was the "end" of it, and how it was to be "considered," and wherein the so doing was a motive to "follow their faith," lies before us in these words.

(1.) Ἀναστροφή is the word constantly used in the New Testament to express the way or course of men's walking and converse in the world, with respect unto moral duties, and the whole of the obedience which God requires of them; which we usually call their "conversation." And it is used concerning that which is bad and to be disallowed, as well as that which is good and approved. But usually when it is used in the first sense, it hath some discriminating epithet joined with it, as "evil," "vain," or "former," Gal. 1:13; Eph. 4:22; 1 Pet. 1:18. In a good sense we have it, 1 Tim. 4:12; James 3:13; 1 Pet. 1:15, 3:2, 16. This is that which God enjoins in the covenant: "Walk before me, and be thou upright." Our "conversation" is our walk before God in all duties of obedience.

(2.) This conversation of theirs had now received its ἔκβασις. The word is but once more used, and then we render it "an escape:" Σὺν τω πειρασμῶ καὶ τὴν ἔκβασιν, 1 Cor. 10:13;—"Together with the temptation an escape," or "a way to

escape." It is not therefore merely an "end" that is intended: nor doth the word signify a common end, issue, or event of things; but an end accompanied with a deliverance from, and so a conquest over, such difficulties and dangers as men were before exposed unto. These persons, in the whole course of their conversation, were exercised with difficulties, dangers, and sufferings, all attempting to stop them in their way, or to turn them out of it. But what did it all amount unto,—what was the issue of their conflict? It was a blessed deliverance from all troubles, and conquest over them. And it is not so much their conversation, as this end of it, which the apostle here calls them unto the consideration of; which yet cannot be done without a right consideration of the conversation itself. Consider what it came to. Their faith failed not, their hope did not perish, they were not disappointed, but had a blessed end of their walk and course.

Ἀναθεωροῦντες. (3.) This they are advised to "consider," *ἀναθεωροῦντες*. The word is but once more used in the New Testament, where the apostle applies it to express the consideration which he took of the devotion or the altars of the Athenians, Acts 17:23. He looked diligently on them, again and again, with a reiterated inspection, to read and take notice of their inscriptions; which required a curious and careful consideration. Such is here spoken of; not consisting in some slight, transient thoughts, with which we usually pass over such things, but a repeated, reiterated contemplation of the matter, with its causes and circumstances.

(4.) And in the last place, by their so doing they would be stirred up to follow their faith. It was a motive to them so to do. For their faith it was which carried them through all their difficulties and all their temptations, and gave them a blessed issue out of them all. See James 5:10, 11.

Hebrews 13: 8

Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς χθὲς καὶ σήμερον ὁ αὐτὸς, καὶ εἰς τοῦς αἰῶνας.

Vulg., "Jesus Christus heri et hodie, ipse et in seculum;" "Jesus Christ, yesterday and to-day," (where it placeth the comma,) "and he [is] the same for ever." So Beza; "Jesus Christ yesterday, and to-day, and he is the same for ever." Others, better, "Jesus Christus heri et hodie, idem etiam est in secula." So the Syriac, וְהוּא וְלָעָלַם, "is the same, and for ever."

Ver. 8.—Jesus Christ the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.

Two things are to be considered in these words: first, the occasion of them; and then their sense and meaning. And as unto the occasion of their use in this place, some think that they refer to what went before, in confirmation of it; some unto what follows after, as a direction in it; and some observe their usefulness unto both these ends. But this will be the more clearly discovered when the sense of them is agreed upon. For to me they appear as a glorious light which the apostle sets up to guide our minds in the consideration of his whole discourse, that we may see whence it all proceeds, and whereunto it tends. He is the Alpha and Omega, the first and the last, the beginner and finisher of our faith, as we shall see.

Χθὲς καὶ σήμερον. There are various interpretations of the words; of these especially, "yesterday" and "to-day." By "to-day," all understand the present time, or the time during the dispensation of the gospel. By "yesterday," Enjedinus says that a short time before is intended;—that which was of late, namely, since the birth of Christ, at most; which was not long before. He is followed by Schlichtingius and all the Socinians. Than this there cannot be a more absurd sense given of the words. For when we say of any one that he is of yesterday, χθὲς καὶ πρώην, it is spoken of him in contempt. "We are of yesterday, and know nothing," Job 8:9. But the design of the apostle is to utter that which tends to the honour of Christ, and not unto his diminution. And the Scripture expressions of him unto this purpose are constantly of another nature. "He was in the beginning, he was with God, and he was God;" "The LORD possessed me in the beginning of his way;" "Whose goings forth are from of old, from everlasting." The same Holy Spirit doth not say of him he is of yesterday,—a new god, whom their fathers knew not. Nor is such an intimation of any use unto the purpose of the apostle.

Grotius, and he that follows him, would have "yesterday" to denote the time wherein the rulers before mentioned did live, as "to-day" is the present time of these Hebrews. But this sense also is jejune, and nothing to the mind of the apostle, invented only for an evasion from the testimony supposed to be here given unto the eternity of the person of Christ; which I wonder the other did not observe, who follows not Grotius in such things.

"Yesterday," say some, is used here not only for all time that is past, but unto the spring of it in eternity; as "to-day" signifies the whole course of time to the end of the world; and "for ever," that everlasting state that doth ensue. Neither is this unconsonant unto what the Scripture affirms of Christ in other places. See the exposition on chap. 1:10–12.

By "yesterday," some understand the time of the old testament, that dispensation of God and his grace that was now ceased, and become like the day that is past. And a day it was, Heb. 3; and it was now as yesterday. And so "to-day" denotes the times of the gospel. Neither is there anything in this interpretation that is uncompliant with the analogy of faith.

Ἰησοῦς Χριστός. But clearly to comprehend the mind of the Holy Ghost herein, sundry things are to be observed; as, 1. That it is the person of Jesus Christ that is spoken of. Nor is this whole name, Jesus Christ, ever used unto any other purpose but to signify his person. It is false, therefore, that it is here taken metonymically for his doctrine, or the gospel; nor is such a sense any way to the purpose of the apostle. 2. Where the person of Christ is intended, there his divine nature is always included; for Christ is God and man in one person. 3. The apostle speaks not of the person of Christ absolutely, but with respect unto his office, and his discharge of it; or he declares who and what he was therein. Λὐτός. 4. It is from his divine person, that, in the discharge of his office, he was ὁ αὐτός, "the same." So it is said of him, Σὺ δὲ ὁ αὐτὸς εἶ, chap. 1:12,—"But thou art the same;" that is, eternal, immutable, indeficient. See the exposition of that place. 5. Being so in himself, he is so in his office from first to last; so that, although divers alterations were made in the institutions of divine worship, and there were many degrees and parts of divine revelation, yet in and through them all Jesus Christ was still the same. Wherefore, 6. There is no need to affix a determinate, distinct sense, as unto the notation of time, unto each word, as "yesterday," "to-day," and "for ever;" the apostle designing, by a kind of proverbial speech, wherein respect is had unto all seasons, to denote the eternity and immutability of Christ in them all. To the same purpose he is said to be ὁ ὢν, καὶ ὁ ἦν, καὶ ὁ ἐρχόμενος, Rev. 1:4;—"he who is, and who was, and who is to come." 7. This, then, is the sense of these words: Jesus Christ, in every state of the church, in every condition of believers, is the same unto them, being always the same in his divine person; and will be so unto the consummation of all things. He is, he ever was, all and in all unto the church. He is "the same," the author, object, and finisher of faith; the preserver and rewarder of them that believe, and that equally in all generations.

Our last inquiry is concerning the connection of these words with the other parts of the apostle's discourse, and what is the use of the interposition of this assertion in this place. And it is agreed that it may have respect either unto what goes before, or what follows after, or unto both. And this we may comply with; though, as I observed before, there is a great appearance that it stands absolutely

by itself, as directing believers, on all occasions of duty such as he insists on, whither they should retreat and repair in their minds for direction, relief, and supportment; namely, unto Jesus Christ, who is always the same for these ends. Whatever difficulties they may meet withal in the duties of their evangelical profession, let them but remember who it is that is concerned in them and with them, and it will give them both strength and encouragement.

But the words have a seasonable respect unto what goeth before, and what follows after them. In the preceding verse (for we have no reason to look higher in this series of duties, independent one on another) the Hebrews are enjoined to persevere in the faith of their first apostolical teachers, and to have the same faith in themselves as they had. Now, whereas they had by their faith a blessed and victorious end of their whole conversation, they might consider, that Jesus Christ, who is always the same in himself, would likewise be the same to them, to give them the like blessed end of their faith and obedience. As he was when they believed in him, so he is now unto them; because he is in himself always the same, and for ever. No greater encouragement could be given them unto diligence in this duty: 'You shall find Christ unto you what he was unto them.' As unto that part of his discourse which follows, it is a dehortation from strange doctrines and the observation of Judaical ceremonies. And unto both parts of it this declaration of the nature and office of Christ is subservient. For here a rule is fixed as unto trial of all doctrines, namely, the acknowledgment of Christ in his person and office; which in the like case is given us by the apostle John, 1 Epist. 4:2, 3. Let this foundation be laid, Whatever complies with the revelation hereof is true and genuine; what doth not, is various and strange. And as unto the other part of the dehortation, 'To what end,' saith the apostle, 'should men trouble themselves with the distinction of meats, and the like Mosaical observances, whereas in the time wherein they were enjoined they were in themselves of no advantage, though for a season they had their especial ends? for it was Christ alone that even then was all unto the church, as unto its acceptance with God.'

And so I hope we have restored these words unto their sense and use. And we may observe, that,—

Obs. I. The due consideration of Jesus Christ, especially in his eternity, immutability, and indeficiency in his power, as he is always the same, is the great encouragement of believers in their whole profession of the faith, and all the difficulties they may meet withal upon the account thereof.

Obs. II. As no changes formerly made in the institutions of divine worship altered any thing in the faith of the church with respect unto Christ, for he was, and is still the same; so no necessitudes we may meet withal in our profession, by oppression or persecution, ought in the least to shake us, for Christ is still the same, to protect, relieve, and deliver us.

Obs. III. He that can in the way of his duty on all occasions retreat unto Jesus Christ, and the due consideration of his person in the discharge of his office, will not fail of relief, supportment, and consolation.

Obs. IV. A steadfast cleaving unto the truth concerning the person and office of Christ, will preserve us from hearkening to various and strange doctrines perverting our souls. And,—

Obs. V. Jesus Christ from the beginning of the world was the object of the faith of the church; that is, from the giving of the first promise. And,—

Obs. VI. It is the immutability and eternity of Jesus Christ in his divine person that renders him a meet object of the faith of the church in the discharge of his office.

All which truths are contained in this assertion of the apostle, with the occasion and use of it in this place.

Hebrews 13: 9–17

The ensuing context, from hence unto the 17th verse, seems abstruse, and the reasonings of the apostle in it not easy to be apprehended. But expositors do generally overlook it, and attend only unto the exposition of the parts of it severally by themselves. To find out the mind of the Holy Ghost in the whole, we must consider the design of the apostle in it, and how he deduces one thing from another. These things, therefore, we must inquire into; and thereby the way will be prepared for the exposition of the several parts of the discourse itself. And we must take our rise from the occasion of it.

1. There was at this time not only an obstinate adherence unto Mosaical ceremonies amongst many of the Jews who professed the gospel, but also an endeavour to re-enforce their necessity, and to impose their observation upon others. These things the apostle opposeth in the whole epistle; and on the occasion of the mention of Christ with his unchangeableness in the church, he adds in this place a dehortation in general from a continuance in the observance of those rites, or reaching after doctrines concerning them; such as were taught amongst the Gentiles by some out of Judea, Acts 15:1.

2. He adds a reason of this dehortation and warning; which is, their inconsistency with the gospel, the nature of Christian religion, and that great principle of it, namely, that "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever." And he proceedeth herein on sundry acknowledged principles, which he supposeth or expresseth.

(1.) He supposeth that the spring of all their observances about meats, eating or not eating, and consequently of the other rites of the same nature, was from the altar. With respect thereunto was the determination of things clean and unclean. For what might be offered on the altar, was clean; and what might not, was not so. And sundry laws there are of what may be eaten of the sacrifices by the priests, and what might not.

(2.) That the foundation of religion lies in an altar; for it doth so in an atonement for sin made in it, or upon it. And by it is all our worship to be offered unto God; nor can it be otherwise accepted with him. Wherefore he affirms that we also have an altar; yet not of such a nature as that from thence any distinction of meats should ensue, verse 10.

(3.) That whatever be the benefits of this altar of ours, the way of the participation of them is not the administration of the services of the old tabernacle; nor could they who administered therein claim a title or right unto them by virtue of any divine institution, but if they rested in that administration, they were excluded from them.

3. He adds the reason hereof, taken from the nature of our altar, and the sacrifice thereon; which is a sacrifice of expiation, to sanctify the people by blood. And in the very type of it, it was declared that there was no right of eating or distinction of meats to ensue thereon. For in the solemn sacrifices of expiation and atonement, as we shall see, the blood of them was carried into the holy place, and the bodies of them were burned entirely without the camp, so as that the priests themselves had no right to eat any thing of them, verses 11, 12.

4. In answer hereunto, the Lord Christ, who is himself both our altar and our sacrifice, in the offering of himself, carried his own blood, in the efficacy of it for atonement, into the holy place of heaven; and suffered in his body "without the gate," or in the place answering unto that without the camp wherein the bodies of the beasts that were sacrificed were burned, verse 12. So that there is no place now left for eating, or distinction of meats. Yea,—

5. Hereby a new state of religion, answerable unto the nature of this altar and sacrifice, is introduced, wherewith those observances which depended on the nature and use of the altar at the tabernacle were utterly inconsistent. Wherefore, whoever adhered unto them did therein renounce this altar of ours, and the religion founded thereon; for none can have an interest in two altars at the same time, of such different natures, and drawing after them such different religious observations. And,—

6. He adds, in the last place, what we are to learn from the nature and use of our altar and sacrifice, in opposition unto the meats which belonged to the old typical altar. And hereof he instanceth in patient bearing of the cross, or suffering for Christ, verse 13; self-denial, as unto any interest in temporal enjoyments, verse 14; the continual worship of God in and by spiritual sacrifices, made acceptable in Christ, our altar, priest, and sacrifice, verse 15; and usefulness amongst men in all good works of piety and charity, verse 16; these being the only sacrifices that we are now called unto.

I hope we have not missed the apostle's design and reasoning in this analysis of his discourse; which makes his sublime way of arguing in this great mystery plain and evident, and gives us a safe rule for the interpretation of every particular passage in it.

Ver. 9.—Διδαχαῖς ποικίλαις καὶ ξέναις μὴ περιφέρεσθε· καλὸν γὰρ χάριτι βεβαιοῦσθαι τῆν καρδίαν, οὐ βρώμασιν, ἐν οἷς οὐκ ὠφελήθησαν οἱ περιπατήσαντες

Ver. 9.—Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines; for [it is] good that the heart be established with grace; not with meats, which have not profited them that have walked in them.

There is an inference in these words from what was before asserted concerning the immutability of Christ, and his continuing the same in the church for ever; and several things are included in it.

1. A supposition that the truth concerning the person and office of Christ, whereon all other evangelical truths and duties do depend, had been once delivered unto the Hebrews, by them that had spoken unto them the word of God; of whom mention is made verse 7.

2. That this doctrine is one; whence in the church there is but "one faith," Eph. 4:3–6; and that "once delivered unto the saints," Jude 3, in the revelation made of it by Christ and the apostles, Heb. 2:3, 4. Hence whatever agrees not with it, that proceeds not from it, is uncertain, foreign and alien unto the faith of the church.

3. That by this doctrine the hearts of believers were established in peace with God, and assurance of their acceptance with him.

4. That as there were direct oppositions made unto this doctrine by the obstinate Jews at that time, so there were amongst those who outwardly professed the Christian religion sundry doctrines broached and maintained that were indeed inconsistent with that one faith, and served to no end but to entangle the minds of believers, and at length to turn them off from the gospel.

5. That experience had already evinced the folly of those new doctrines, inasmuch as the things which they led unto were of no use unto the souls of men. And,—

6. In particular, this was the state of those doctrines about Mosaical institutions in the distinction of meats, and things of an alike nature, which many false teachers did then press upon them with great noise and earnestness.

This is the design and substance of the apostle's discourse in this verse, which we shall now consider in particular.

The words contain a dehortation from an evil, with the reason or enforcement of it.

Διδαχαῖς ποικίλαις καὶ ξέναις. First, The dehortation is in these words, "Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines." And we must inquire what these "strange doctrines" were; and what it is to be "carried about" with them.

1. It is evident that the doctrines intended were such as did then infest the churches of the Hebrews; others they were not in present danger of. And this is manifest in the especial instance given about meats. And they are called "various," as it may be on other accounts, (as we shall see,) so because they were not reducible unto that "one faith" which was "once delivered unto the saints." And they are called "strange," or "alien," as being of another kind than they, no way related unto them.

And it may be they are said to be "various," because they had no consistency nor agreement among themselves. For so some think that the apostle had respect unto the doctrines which were controverted in the schools of the Jews, between the followers of Hillel on the one side, and Shammai on the other. But these they kept within themselves, and never troubled the Christian churches withal. Howbeit, because the Jews placed much of their religion in these doctrines, and their contests about them, it may be the apostle here reflects on them, as he doth in other places, Tit. 1:14, 3:9; 1 Tim. 1:4. But I rather think he calls them "various" from their object. They were about various things. So he

calls, by another word of the same signification, the Jewish rites, "divers" or "various washings," Heb. 9:10. The things were many and various, and so were the doctrines concerning them; which are since multiplied in their Talmud and other writings, into such a heap of confusion as is inexpressible. Or he calls them "various," as those which took off the mind from its stability, tossing it up and down in all uncertainties; as variety of doctrines is apt to do. When once men begin to give ear unto such doctrines, they lose all the rest and composure of their minds; as we see by experience.

And they are "strange," as being concerning things foreign to the gospel, that are uncompliant with the nature and genius of it. Such are all doctrines about religious ceremonies, and the scrupulous observation of them; for "the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost," Rom. 14:17.

Περιφέρεσθε. 2. With respect unto these doctrines, the charge in the dehortation is, that they should not be "carried about" with them. To the same purpose he useth the same word, Eph. 4:14, "Tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine." There is an allusion unto ships, and the impression of the wind upon them; for the word joined with this here used, κλυδωνιζόμενος, signifies one that is tossed on the waves of the sea when they are agitated by the wind. And a similitude it is lively expressing both the nature of these strange doctrines, the way of spreading of them, and their effects on the minds of men. In themselves they are light and vain as the wind, or "clouds without water, carried about of winds." And those who would impose them on others commonly do it with a great and vehement blustering. 'You must be circumcised, or you cannot be saved!' as Acts 15:1. 'Unless you believe and practise these things, you are heretics, or schismatics, and cannot be saved!' All imposition of doctrine is with such a noise and wind. And the effects of them on the minds of men are as those of contrary winds at sea. They toss men up and down; they turn them out of their course, and endanger their destruction. So is it with these doctrines: First, they fill the minds of men with uncertainties, as unto what they have believed, and as unto what is proposed unto them; and then, for the most part, they alter the whole course of their profession; and lastly, endanger their eternal ruin. All these are fully exemplified in the instance of the Galatian churches, which were carried about with these strange doctrines. See Gal. 1:6, 7, 3:1, 4:9–11, 5:1–5. Throughout that whole epistle the evil here cautioned against is evidently exemplified.

And there are many weighty directions intimated and included in these words, for the use of the church at all seasons; as,—

Obs. I. That there is a revelation of truth given unto the church in the word of God; which is the only doctrinal foundation and rule of faith unto it.

Obs. II. That this doctrine is cognate, and every way suited unto the promotion of the grace of God in believers, and the attainment of their own salvation.

Obs. III. That doctrines unsuited unto this first revelation by Christ and his apostles, as recorded in the Scripture,—alien and foreign from them,—did soon spring up, unto the trouble of the church; they had done so in those days, and continued to do so in all ensuing ages.

Obs. IV. That usually such doctrines as are empty of truth and substance, useless and foreign to the nature and genius of evangelical grace and truth, are imposed by their authors and abettors with great noise and vehemency on those who have been instructed in the truth.

Obs. V. Where such doctrines are entertained, they make men double-minded, unstable, turning them from the truth, and drawing them at length into perdition.

Obs. VI. The ruin of the church in after ages arose from the neglect of this apostolical caution, in giving heed unto various and strange doctrines; which at length overthrew and excluded the fundamental doctrines of the gospel.

Obs. VII. Herein lies the safety of all believers, and all churches, namely, to keep themselves precisely unto the first complete revelation of divine truth in the word of God.—Let men pretend what they will, and bluster whilst they please, in an adherence unto this principle we are safe; and if we depart from it, we shall be hurried and carried about through innumerable uncertainties unto ruin.

Γάρ. Secondly, The remaining words give a reason and enforcement of this charge. So the conjunctive particle, "for," doth declare. And a particular instance is given of those doctrines which he had warned them about, namely, "meats." And in the words there is, 1. An end proposed which ought to be aimed at in the profession of religion; and that is, "the establishment of the heart." 2. Two ways mentioned whereby, as is pleaded, it may be attained; and they are "grace" and "meats." 3. A preference given herein unto grace: "It is good that the heart be

established with grace, not with meats." 4. A reason is added hereof from the insufficiency of meats unto that purpose: "They have not profited them that walked in them." All which must be opened.

Βεβαιοῦσθαι τὴν καρδίαν. 1. The end to be aimed at in the profession of religion, is, that "the heart be established." The "heart," that is, of every believer, and so of them all. Βεβαιόω is to "confirm," to "establish;" and is applied both to things and persons. So the word of the gospel is said to be "confirmed" or "established by signs," Mark 16:20; and the testimony of Christ, 1 Cor. 1:6; and the promises, by their accomplishment, Rom. 15:8. And so it is applied unto persons, 1 Cor. 1:8, "confirm" or "establish you;" "he that stablisheth us," 2 Cor. 1:21; and we are said to be "established in the faith," Col. 2:7: in all which places the same word is used. And "the heart" is here taken for the mind, the soul or spirit, as is usual in the Scripture. Wherefore, to have "the heart established," is to be so confirmed in the faith, as to have these two effects wrought thereby: (1.) A fixed persuasion of the mind in the truth;—a just, firm settlement of mind in the assurance of it. This is opposed unto a being "tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine" Eph. 4:14. And hereunto it is required that the pure doctrine of the gospel be embraced. (2.) That through the truth the heart do enjoy peace with God; which alone will establish it, giving it firmitude and rest in every condition. It is to be kept in perfect peace, with the mind stayed on God. This is that which we ought to aim at in and by religion. Hereby the mind comes to assured peace; which nothing can give but grace, as we shall see. And hereby the heart is rendered unmovable, 1 Cor. 15:58.

Χάριτι. 2. The heart is thus "established by grace." "Grace" is a word of various significations. There is one who hath reckoned up a great number of places to prove that by grace the gospel is signified, whereof scarce any one doth prove it. The gospel is indeed sometimes called "the word of God's grace;" and sometimes it may be metonymically grace, as being the means of the revelation of the grace of God, and the instrument of the communication of it unto believers, "the power of God unto salvation." Wherefore "grace" here, is the free grace of God in Christ Jesus, for the justification and sanctification of the church, as it is revealed in the gospel. The revelation of it in the gospel is included, but it is the grace of God himself that is principally intended. In brief, "grace" here is to be taken comprehensively, for the grace, good-will, and love of God towards men, as it came by Jesus Christ, as it is revealed in the gospel as the cause of our justification and acceptance with God, in opposition unto the works of the law and the observance of Mosaical rites unto that end. This is the most eminent

signification of "grace," with respect unto the expiation of our sins in the blood of Christ, and the pardon of them thereon, revealed and tendered unto us in the gospel. This is that alone which doth, which can, which will, establish the heart of a sinner in peace with God, Rom. 5:1; which will keep it from being moved or tossed up and down with a sense of the guilt of sin, or divine displeasure.

Οὐ βρώμασι. That which is opposed hereunto, with respect unto the same end, is meats, "Not with meats." Not that the heart may be established by meats also; for this the apostle denies in the next words. The meaning is, not that there are indeed two ways whereby the heart may be established, the one by grace, the other by meats; but that grace is the only way thereof, though some foolishly pretended that it might be done by meats. That by "meats," in this case, the apostle doth constantly intend the religious distinction of meats among the Jews, is openly evident. See Rom. 14:17; 1 Cor. 8:8; Col. 2:16; Heb. 9:10. There is no reason, therefore, to question but that this is the sense of it in this place. And as in other places, so here, by a synecdoche, the whole system of Mosaical institutions is intended, but expressed by "meats," because of their immediate relation unto the altar, whereof the apostle designs to speak.

All distinction of meats among the Jews, as was before observed, arose from the altar. And those meats were of two sorts; such as were enjoined or prohibited by way of duty, and such as were obtained by way of privilege. Of the first sort was the distinction of meats, clean and unclean. For when the apostle speaks of meats, he doth not intend only the eating of meats in a particular way and manner, (though, as we shall see, he intends that also,) but an abstinence also from eating of meats, by virtue of divine prohibition; concerning which were those legal institutions which the apostle expresseth by "Touch not, taste not, handle not," Col. 2:21. And in these abstinences from meats the Jews placed so much of their religion, that they would rather die by the cruelest tortures than eat flesh prohibited by the law; and that justly and according to their duty, whilst the divine prohibition was yet in force. And this distinction of meats arose from the altar. The beasts that might be offered at the altar in sacrifice were clean: for therein the first-fruits, or principal part, being dedicated unto God, the whole of the kind became clean unto the people. And what had not the privilege of the altar, was prohibited unto the people. Again, there were meats that were obtained by privilege; and such were the portions taken from the sacrifices, that the priests, and in some cases (as of the thank-offering, Lev. 7:11–15) other clean persons, might and did eat, by divine institution. And these

kinds of meats depended solely on the altar. This institution is mentioned only to show the ground of the apostle's rejecting all these kinds of meats on this consideration, that we have an altar of another sort, whereon no such institutions do depend, nor can any such differences in meats arise.

And hence we may see the reason why the Jews laid so much weight on these meats, namely, because the taking of them away, the distinction about them and the privilege of them, did declare that their altar, which was the life and centre of their religion, was of no more use. And hence we may also see the reason of the apostle's different treating with them in this matter. For speaking of meats in themselves, and in their own nature, he declares that the use or forbearing of them is a thing indifferent, wherein every one is to be left unto his own liberty, to be regulated only by offence or scandal (see Rom. 14 throughout); but when he treats of them as unto a necessary observation, as deriving from the altar, he utterly condemns them, and shows that their observance did evacuate the gospel, Gal. 2; Col. 2:16–23.

From this apprehension of their derivation from the altar, the Judaizing Christians had a conceit that they were of use to establish the heart; that is, had an influence into our justification and peace with God. This the apostle here rejects; as he vehemently disputes against it in his whole epistle to the Galatians.

Καλόν. 3. The next thing in the words is the way whereby the apostle assigns this whole effect of establishing the heart unto grace, and wholly takes it away from meats, or the manner of the expression used by him, "It is good," etc. The meaning is, the heart is to be established; and that not only as unto the essence of that duty, or grace, but as unto such degrees of it as may safeguard and preserve it from being "carried about with various and strange doctrines," or otherwise shaken as unto its peace. 'This is good, this is excellent,' saith the apostle, 'when it is done by grace; this is approved of God; this it is our duty to labour after.' And in this positive the comparative is included (the Vulgate renders it by the superlative, "optimus"),—it is so good and excellent as to be far better than a false, pretended settlement by meats. And this the apostle proves in the last place, from the insufficiency of meats unto that end, taken from experience.

Ἐν οἷς οἱ περιπατήσαντες. 4. "Which have not profited them who have walked in them." To walk in meats, is to assent unto and observe the doctrine concerning them—"Touch not, taste not, handle not." And he speaketh of the time past, both whilst the distinction of meats was in force, and since it was

taken away. For of themselves they profited not those who observed them, even whilst the institutions concerning them were in force; for they were a part of the "yoke" that was imposed on them "until the time of reformation," Heb. 9:10. Οὐκ ὠφελήθησαν. And so far as they were trusted unto as a means of acceptance with God, they were pernicious unto them: which the apostle by a common figure intimates, in that "they did not profit them;" that is, they tended to their hurt. And it was much more so with them who continued to walk in them after the obligation thereunto did cease. They were so far from having their hearts established, as that they received no benefit or advantage, but much hurt and prejudice, by them. And we see,—

Obs. VIII. That those who decline in any thing from grace, as the only means to establish their hearts in peace with God, shall labour and exercise themselves in other things and ways unto the same end, whereby they shall receive no advantage.—And this is the state of all false worshippers in the world, especially in the papal church, and those that follow its example.

Ver. 10.—Ἔχομεν θυσιαστήριον, ἐξ οὗ φαγεῖν οὐκ ἐχουσιν ἐξουσίαν οἱ τῇ σκηνῇ λατρεύοντες.

Ver. 10.—We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat who serve the tabernacle.

The design of the context and the coherence of the words have in general been spoken unto before. The introduction of them, at first view, seems to be abrupt; but whereas he had spoken in the foregoing verse about meats, treating here about a right to eat or not, it is evident that he hath a respect thereunto. Wherefore, having asserted the only way of the establishment of the heart in peace with God, and the uselessness of all distinctions of meats unto that purpose, he here declareth the foundation of the truth on the one side and the other. For whereas the sole ground of all distinction of meats and other ceremonies among the Jews, was the altar in the tabernacle, with its nature, use, and services; he lets them know that that altar being now removed, and taken away, we have an altar of another nature, which requireth and produceth services quite of another kind than those which arose from the altar of old, such as he describes, verses 13–15. This is the direct design of the apostle in this place, and the proper analysis of his words.

There is in the words, 1. An assertion, "We have an altar." 2. A limitation of its use, by a rejection of them who had a right unto the privileges of the old altar, "Whereof those have no right," etc.

Ἔχομεν. 1. "We have;"—that is, 'We also, who believe in Christ according to the gospel, and worship God in spirit and truth, we also have an altar; we have every thing in the substance, whereof they of old had only the name and shadow.'

Θυσιαστήριον. What this altar is which the Christian church hath and useth, there have been some disputes, occasioned by the superstition of latter ages. For some would have it a material altar made of stone, whereon an unbloody sacrifice of the flesh and blood of Christ is offered by priests every day; plainly of the same kind, nature, and use, with that in the tabernacle. And thence this altar also hath been made the spring of many ceremonial observances, distinction of meats, with such an eating of flesh from it as is indeed destructive of all religion. And some think that the table which the church useth in the celebration of the supper of the Lord is here metaphorically called an altar, because of the communication of the sacrifice of Christ which is made at it. But these things are wholly foreign to the design of the apostle. The altar which we now have is Christ alone, and his sacrifice. For he was both priest, altar, and sacrifice, all in himself; and continueth still so to be unto the church, as unto all the use and efficacy of them. And this is evident in the context. For,—

(1.) This altar here is, in its nature, use, and efficacy, opposed unto the altar in the tabernacle, as it is express in the words of this verse; but that which throughout this whole discourse the apostle opposeth unto all the utensils, services, and sacrifices of the tabernacle, is Christ alone, and the sacrifice of himself, as is manifest and undeniable. Besides, the opposition he makes is between signs and things signified, shadows and the substance, types and the reality of the things themselves; but it is fond to imagine that the altar of old was a type, a sign, a shadow of a table in the church, or that any thing but Christ was so [signified].

(2.) The apostle doth declare who and what it is that he intends by the altar which we have; namely, that it is Jesus, who, to sanctify the people with his blood, which was to be done at or on the altar, "suffered without the gate," verse 12. And by him, as our altar, we are to offer our sacrifices unto God, verse 15. This is Christ and his sacrifice alone.

(3.) The sacrifices which we are obliged unto by virtue of this altar are such as have no respect unto any material altar, but are such as are to be offered unto God through Christ alone, as all the Scripture testifieth, verse 15; namely, "the sacrifice of praise," which is "the fruit of our lips, confessing unto his name;" which leads us off from all thoughts and conceptions of any material altar.

(4.) In those days, and in some ages after, the Christians had no material altars; and they denied on all occasions that they had any.

Estius, one of the soberest expositors of the Roman church, concludes that it is Christ and his sacrifice alone that is intended in this place. But he adds withal, that because the fathers (that is, some of them, for all do not) do expound it of the altar for the sacrament in the church, the heretics are to be urged with their authority for a material altar and sacrifice in the church!—wherein he extremely departs from his wonted modesty. For can any man in his wits suppose that the authority of men asserting a confessed untruth, can be of any weight in way of testimony? If a man should produce witnesses in any cause, and after he hath declared of what credit they are, and how they deserve to be believed, should add, that what they bear witness unto is undoubtedly false, would not his plea of testimonies be weak and contemptible? Yea, is not this sufficient to warrant any man to question their bare authority in other things, when, as it seems, they agree so well in that which is untrue? But thus it falls out frequently with this Estius in his commentaries. When he hath (which he doth frequently, in things of great importance) come nearer the truth than the current expositions of the Roman church will bear, he is forced to countenance himself by some impertinent reflections on Calvin, or Beza, or the sectaries in general, which he hath neither occasion nor countenance for from the context; —so vile a thing is ecclesiastical bondage.

The truth is, this place is so far from giving countenance unto the altar and sacrifice on it in the church of Rome, that it sufficiently testifieth that the apostle knew not of any such thing; but proposeth a scheme of Christian profession and worship, utterly inconsistent with them, as we shall see in the ensuing exposition. For whereas their altar, with its sacrifice, is the life and soul of their religion, without which they profess they have none, and contend that there can be none, and that all the mystery and solemnity of their sacred worship consist in the observances and veneration of and at this altar,—whereon they have slain or burned to ashes innumerable Christians for their non-compliance with them in the faith and worship of this altar and its sacrifice,—the apostle here, where, if anywhere, he had occasion to make

mention of it, yea, to declare its whole nature and use in the church, and at least give some intimation of its way of observance, wherein all the glory of their worship doth consist, doth not only pass it by in silence, but also, avowing Christ himself to be our altar, and asserting a worship or service thereon of no alliance, as we shall see, unto their altar service, he leaves their altar, its sacrifice, and services, quite out of the compass of our Christian profession. But I return. And we may observe,—

Obs. I. That the Lord Christ, in the one sacrifice of himself, is the only altar of the church of the new testament.

Obs. II. That this altar is every way sufficient in itself for the end of an altar, namely, the sanctification of the people; as verse 12.

Obs. III. The erection of any other altar in the church, or the introduction of any other sacrifice requiring a material altar, is derogatory to the sacrifice of Christ, and exclusive of him from being our altar.

Obs. IV. Whereas the design of the apostle, in the whole of his discourse, is to declare the glory of the gospel and its worship above that of the law, of our priest above theirs, of our sacrifice above theirs, of our altar above theirs; it is fond to think, that by our altar, he intends such a material fabric as is every way inferior unto that of old.

Obs. V. When God appointed a material altar for his service, he himself enjoined the making of it, prescribed its form and use, with all its utensils, services, and ceremonies, allowing of nothing in it, or about it, but what was by himself appointed; it is not therefore probable, that under the new testament there should be a material altar of equal necessity with that under the old, accompanied in its administrations with various utensils, ceremonies, and services, neither itself nor any of them being of divine appointment. But,—

Obs. VI. Sinners under a sense of guilt have in the gospel an altar of atonement, whereunto they may have continual access for the expiation of their sins.—He is the propitiation.

Οἱ τῇ σκηνῇ λατρεύοντες. 2. The limitation of the use of this altar ensues: "Whereof they have no right to eat who serve the tabernacle." The persons excluded from the right mentioned are those who "serve the tabernacle." The apostle speaks in the present tense, those "who do serve," or "who are serving" at the tabernacle. For he hath respect unto the original institution of divine worship, and that was in and under the tabernacle; and he takes no notice of the

things that ensued on the erection of the temple, which made no alteration in the worship itself. And supposing them in the state wherein they were at first appointed, he expresseth it in the present tense, "that do serve."

"That do serve:" The word is used constantly for the services that are used in sacred worship. So it is here;—those who administered the things belonging unto divine worship in the tabernacle. These were the priests and Levites, in their several orders and degrees.

These had a right to eat of the altar in the tabernacle; that is, of the things that where consecrated thereby, and a part whereof was offered thereon. Hereunto they had a right by divine institution. For they who minister about holy things, eat the things of the temple; and they that wait at the altar, partake with the altar, 1 Cor. 9:13. So also chap. 10:18; wherein the apostle had respect unto the institutions of the law giving right unto the priests to eat of things sanctified by the altar. And it was a right which did appropriate this privilege unto them. It was not lawful for any others to eat any thing from the altar, unless it were in the case of the thank-offering, by especial indulgence, or in case of extreme necessity, Matt. 12:3, 4.

This right, or any other of an alike nature, they had not, to eat of that altar which we have.

Ἐξ οὗ φαγεῖν οὐκ ἐχουσιν ἐξουσίαν. "Whereof," "of which;"—the altar, and all the things which are sanctified thereby.

"To eat:" Eating was the only way of the participation of meats from the altar; what was every one's portion was to be eaten. Hence the apostle useth "to eat" here, for any kind of participation. He doth not intend that we have an altar whereof some may eat, namely, of meats taken from it and consecrated by it, which they had no right to do; but only that they have no right to participate of the benefits of our altar in any way or kind. Hereunto they had "no right" or title; that is, they had not by virtue of any divine institution. He doth not absolutely exclude such persons from ever attaining an interest in our altar. But he doth it in two respects: (1.) They had no such right by virtue of their office and relation unto the tabernacle: (2.) That whilst they adhered unto that privilege, and the use of meats thereby for the establishment of their hearts in peace with God, they could have no interest in this altar of ours. And we may see,—

Obs. VII. That all privileges, of what nature soever, without a participation of Christ, as the altar and sacrifice of the church, are of no advantage unto them that enjoy them.

Ver. 11, 12.—Ὧν γὰρ εἰσφέρεται ζώων τὸ αἷμα περὶ ἁμαρτίας εἰς τὰ ἅγια διὰ τοῦ ἀρχιερέως, τούτων τὰ σώματα κατακαίεται ἔξω τῆς παρεμβολῆς. Διὸ καὶ Ἰησοῦς, ἵνα ἁγιάσῃ διὰ τοῦ ἰδίου αἵματος τὸν λαὸν, ἔξω τῆς πύλης ἔπαθε.

Ver. 11, 12.—For the bodies of those beasts whose blood, [being] a sin-offering, is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest, are burnt without the camp. Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate

The apostle in these words proceeds to the confirmation of his whole present design, in all the parts of it; and they are three: 1. To declare of what nature our altar and sacrifice are; and thereon of what nature and kind the duties of religion are which proceed from them and depend upon them. 2. To testify that the removal of all distinction of meats, by virtue of this altar, was signified in the old institutions, which had their accomplishment in this altar and sacrifice. 3. To show the necessity of the suffering of Christ without the gate of the city, from the typical representation of it; so to make way for the declaration of the use that we are to make of it. All which will be evidenced in the exposition of the words.

Ver 11.—"For the bodies of those beasts whose blood, [being] a sin-offering, is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest, are burnt without the camp."

Περὶ ἁμαρτίας. 1. An instance is given unto the end mentioned, in a sacrifice typical of the sacrifice of Christ. And this is περὶ ἁμαρτίας,—that is, "a sin-offering." See chap. 10:6, with the exposition. 2. Two things are affirmed concerning this sacrifice: (1.) That the blood of the beasts was brought into the sanctuary by the high priest. (2.) That the bodies of the beasts whose blood was so offered for sin were burnt without the camp.

1. The sacrifice intended is the sin-offering. For concerning this kind of sacrifice, and this alone, the institution is plain, Lev. 6:30, "And no sin-offering, whereof any of the blood is brought into the tabernacle of the congregation, to reconcile withal in the holy place, shall be eaten, it shall be burnt in the fire." And that the whole body of the beast was to be carried out of the camp, and burnt in a clean place, is ordained, chap. 4:12. But the apostle hath especial respect unto the sin-offering on the great day of atonement, which was appointed, by "an everlasting statute, to make an atonement for the children of

Israel, for all their sins, once a-year," chap. 16:34; for it was the blood of that sacrifice alone that was carried into the most holy place by the high priest, verses 14–16. And there was an especial institution for the burning of the bodies of the beasts whose blood was then offered, without the camp, the words whereof the apostle doth here repeat: Verse 27, "And the bullock for the sin-offering, and the goat for the sin-offering," (that is, the bodies of the beasts whose blood was brought in to make atonement in the holy place by the high priest,) "shall one carry forth without the camp; and they shall burn in the fire their skins, and their flesh, and their dung."

2. It is therefore evident both what sacrifice is intended, and what are the things affirmed of it; wherein the apostle repeats two divine institutions, the one concerning the blood, the other concerning the bodies, of the beasts that were sacrificed.

(1.) For the first of these, or the way and manner of the high priest's carrying the blood into the holy place to make atonement, see the exposition on chap. 9:6, 7.

(2.) The burning of the bodies was ordained to be "without the camp;" namely, whilst the Israelites were in the wilderness, and abode in tents encamped round about the tabernacle, after the priests and Levites, who pitched immediately about it, Num. 1:53: the order and manner of which encamping is appointed and described, Num. 2; which took up some miles in compass. Unto this camp of the Israelites the city of Jerusalem did afterwards answer, and all the institutions about it were applied thereunto. Wherefore, when this sacrifice was observed in the temple, the bodies of the beasts were carried out of the city to be burned. Hence the apostle makes the suffering of Christ "without the gate," to answer unto the burning of the bodies of the beasts without the camp, the city and the camp being the same thing in this institution.

And sundry things we may here observe, as unto the purpose of the apostle in this place; as, [1.] That this sin-offering on the day of atonement was the principal type of Christ and his sacrifice, among all the sacrifices of the law, as hath been before fully demonstrated. [2.] That the matter of this sacrifice was totally anathematized and devoted, as that which had all the sins and uncleannesses of the church upon it; whence he that burned the bodies of the beasts was legally unclean, Lev. 16:28;—to manifest how fully the Lord Christ was made a curse for us. [3.] That in this sacrifice there was no eating, no meats, or distinction of them, or privilege about them;—all was consumed.

Hence the apostle proves that meats did never contribute any thing towards the establishment of the heart before God. For there was no use of them in or about that sacrifice whereby atonement was made for sin, whereon the establishment of the heart doth depend. Yea, there was herein a clear prefiguration, that when the great atonement was made, there should be no use of the distinction of meats left in the church.

And hereby further way is made for the description of our altar and sacrifice, with the nature of the divine worship ensuing thereon.

Ver. 12.—"Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate."

This is the altar which we have, this is the sacrifice on that altar, and this is the effect of it,—namely, the sanctification of the people.

Διὸ καὶ Ἰησοῦς. And the first thing in the words is the note of inference from what was spoken before: ' "Wherefore Jesus also," what he did was in compliance with the legal institution mentioned.' There was no obligation on him from that institution; but the end of it being a prefiguration of what he was to do and suffer, it was necessary that he should comply therewith. So, although he did nothing but by his own will and choice, yet this reason of what he did is frequently assigned, namely, "that the Scriptures might be fulfilled." Being to fulfil all righteousness, and the whole law, what he did was regulated by the predictions of the Scripture, and the typical representations of what was to be done. See chap. 3:5, with the exposition. This is the ground of the inference here: "Wherefore Jesus also;"—'It must so be, because divine wisdom had given this prefiguration of it.' And,—

Obs. I. The complete answering and fulfilling of all types in the person and office of Christ, testifieth the sameness and immutability of the counsel of God in the whole work of the redemption and salvation of the church, notwithstanding all the outward changes that have been in the institutions of divine worship.—For hence it is manifest, that in the whole "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever."

And there is not only an inference in this expression, but an intimation of a similitude also, such as is between the type and the thing typified: 'As was that sacrifice or sin-offering under the law, so was this of Christ;'—"Wherefore Jesus also."

There are sundry truths of great importance in these words, the consideration whereof will give us the just exposition of them; as,—

Ἔπαθε. 1. That Jesus in his sufferings did offer himself unto God. This is plain in the words. That he might sanctify the people with his blood, he "suffered;" for in that suffering his blood was shed, whereby the people were sanctified: which utterly overthrows the Socinian figment of his oblation in heaven.

2. That in his sufferings he offered himself a sin-offering, in answer unto those legal sacrifices whose blood was carried into the holy place, and their bodies burned without the camp; which were sin-offerings only. It answered, indeed, unto all offerings made by blood (for blood was never used but to make atonement, Lev. 17:11,) yet it had a peculiar representation in the sin-offering on the day of expiation, Lev. 16, as hath been before declared.

Ἵνα. 3. The end of this offering of Christ was, "that he might sanctify the people." This was "finis operis et operantis;"—"the end of what was done, and of him who did it." Ινα hath respect to the final cause; and the object of the work wrought is "the people:" not the church and people of the Jews in general, for the most of them were rejected from the benefit of this sacrifice; and to show that he left them herein, he suffered and offered himself without the gate. Τὸν λαόν In the typical sacrifice of expiation, the bodies of the beasts were carried out of the camp, and burned, to show that they were absolutely anathematized; but the blood was shed and offered at the tabernacle, in the midst of the congregation, because the whole congregation was to be sanctified thereby. But the Lord Jesus offered himself and his blood without the city, or the camp, because he designed not either to confine the benefit of his offering unto that people, or to take them in unto it as a camp, a city, a church, or congregation. But this "people" are elsewhere called "his people," Matt. 1:21, and "church," or "body," Eph. 5:25–27,—that is, all the elect of God, both Jews and Gentiles, 1 John 2:1, 2.

Ἁγιάσῃ. 4. That which he designed and accomplished for this people, was their sanctification. What it is to be sanctified by blood, as offered, hath been before declared; and it is here manifest, by the respect that his had unto the great sacrifice of expiation. It is to have atonement made, or an expiation of the guilt of their sins; an acquitment obtained from the defilement of it, as separating from the favour of God; and a sacred dedication unto him.

Διὰ τοῦ ἰδίου αἵματος. 5. This is that which the Lord Jesus designed for his church; and he did effect it by his own blood. When the blood of Christ is mentioned in this matter, it is emphatically called "his own blood:" "Purchased his church with his own blood," Acts 20:28: "Washed us from our sins in his own

blood," Rev. 1:5. Heb. 9:12, as in this place. And three things are included therein. (1.) An opposition unto the sacrifices of the high priests under the law, which were of the blood of beasts, and not their own. See chap. 9:12, with the exposition. (2.) An evidence of the unspeakable worth and value of this offering, whereon all its efficacy doth depend. Hence it is called God's own blood, Acts 20:28. See Heb. 9:14. (3.) A testimony of what it cost the Lord Jesus to sanctify the people,—even his own blood.

Ἔξω τῆς πύλης. 6. The last thing in the words, is the circumstance of the suffering of Christ,—namely, that it was "without the gate," that is of the city, namely, of Jerusalem; which answered the camp in the wilderness, after the tabernacle was fixed therein. And sundry things are herein included: (1.) That he left the city and church-state of the Jews; whence he denounced their destruction as he went out of the gate, Luke 23:28–30. (2.) He put an end unto all sacrificing in the city and temple, as unto divine acceptation. All was now finishing. (3.) He declared that his sacrifice and the benefits of it were not included in the church of the Jews, but were equally extended unto the whole world, 1 John 2:2, John 11:52. (4.) He declared that his death and suffering were not only a sacrifice, but a punishment for sin; namely, the sins of the people that were to be sanctified by his blood. For he went out of the city as a malefactor, and died the death which by divine institution was a sign of the curse, Gal. 3:13.

By all these things it appears how different our altar and sacrifice are from theirs under the law; and how necessary it is from thence that we should have a worship of another nature than what they had, wherein in particular the distinction of meats should be of no use. And we may observe,—

Obs. II. That the church could no otherwise be sanctified, but by the blood of Jesus, the Son of God. See chap. 10:4–7, with the exposition.

Obs. III. The Lord Jesus, out of his incomprehensible love unto his people, would spare nothing, avoid nothing, deny nothing, that was needful unto their sanctification, their reconciliation, and dedication unto God.—He did it "with his own blood," Eph. 5:25–27; Gal. 2:20; Rev. 1:5; Acts 20:28.

Obs. IV. There was, by divine constitution, a concurrence in the same work of suffering and offering; that satisfaction unto the law and its curse might be made by it, as penal in a way of suffering; and atonement, or reconciliation with God, by the way of a sacrifice or offering.

Obs. V. The whole church is perfectly sanctified by the offering of the blood of Christ, as unto impetration; and it shall be so actually by the virtue of the same blood in its application.

Obs. VI. When the Lord Jesus carried all the sins of his own people in his own body unto the tree, he left the city, as a type of all unbelievers, under the wrath and curse of God.

Obs. VII. Going out of the city as a malefactor, he bore all the reproach that was due to the sins of the church; which was a part of the curse.

Ver. 13, 14.—Τοίνυν ἐξερχώμεθα πρὸς αὐτὸν ἔξω τῆς παρεμβολῆς, τὸν ὀνειδισμὸν αὐτοῦ φέροντες. Οὐ γὰρ ἔχομεν ὧδε μένουσαν πόλιν, ἀλλὰ τὴν μέλλουσαν ἐπιζητοῦμεν.

Ver. 13, 14.—Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach. For we have here no abiding city, but we seek one to come.

From the account given of our altar in the suffering and offering of Christ, with the manner thereof, the apostle draws an exhortation unto that general duty which is the foundation of all our Christian profession, verse 13; and gives an enforcement of the same exhortation, verse 14.

Τοίνυν. 1. The exhortation unto the duty is introduced by a note of inference, which we render "therefore;" which is the sense of the particles τοὶ νῦν in conjunction. 'Seeing the Lord Jesus hath so suffered and offered himself, this now is our duty, that which thereon is required of us; which I therefore exhort you unto.' And for the opening of the words, we must consider, (1.) What is meant by "the camp;" (2.) How we are to "go forth" from it; (3.) How we go to him in our so doing; (4.) In what manner.

Ἔξω τῆς παρεμβολῆς. (1.) The apostle in all this epistle hath respect unto the original institution of the Jewish church-state and worship in the wilderness: therefore he confines his discourse to the tabernacle and the services of it, without any mention of the temple, or the city wherein it was built; though all that he speaks be equally applicable unto them. Now the camp in the wilderness was that space of ground which was taken up by the tents of the people, as they were regularly pitched about the tabernacle. Out of this compass the bodies of the beasts for the sin-offerings were carried and burned. Hereunto afterwards answered the city of Jerusalem, as is evident in this place. For whereas in the foregoing verse Christ is said to "suffer without the gate," here he is said to be "without the camp;" these being all one and the same, as to the purpose of the apostle. Now the camp and city was the seat of all the political and religious

converse of the church of the Jews. To be 'in the camp,' is to have a right unto all the privileges and advantages of the commonwealth of Israel, and the whole divine service of the tabernacle. For if any lost that right by any means, though but for a season, they were removed out of the camp, Lev. 13:46, 24:23; Num. 5:2, 12:15.

Ἐξερχώμεθα. (2.) How were the Hebrews, on the account of this sacrifice of Christ and the sanctification of the people by his own blood, to go out of this camp? For it is all one whether we read the word, "go out of the camp unto him," or "go forth unto him without the camp," namely, who there suffered. Now it is not a local departure out of the city which is intended in the first place; though I am apt to think, from the next verse, that the apostle had some respect also thereunto, for the season was now approaching wherein they were so to depart out of the city before its final destruction. This the apostle may now prepare them for: but that which principally is intended is a moral and religious going forth from this camp. There was nothing that these Hebrews did more value, and more tenaciously adhere unto, than that political and religious interest in the commonwealth of Israel. They could not understand how all the glorious privileges granted of old unto that church and people should so cease as that they ought to forsake them. Hereon the most continued in their unbelief of the gospel; many would have mixed the doctrine of it with their old ceremonies, and the best of them found no small difficulty in their renunciation. But the apostle shows them, that, by the suffering of Christ without the gate or camp, this they were called unto; as,—

Obs. I. All privileges and advantages whatever are to be foregone, parted withal, and renounced, which are inconsistent with an interest in Christ and a participation of him; as our apostle shows at large, Phil. 3:4–10.

Πρὸς αὐτόν. (3.) They were thus to go forth unto him. He went forth at the gate, and suffered; and we must go forth after him, and unto him. And it denotes, [1.] A relinquishment of all the privileges of the camp and city for his sake. Leave them, and go to him. [2.] A closing by faith with his sacrifice, and sanctification thereby, in opposition unto all the sacrifices of the law. [3.] The owning of him under all that reproach and contempt which were cast upon him in his suffering without the gate, or a not being ashamed of his cross. [4.] The betaking ourselves unto him in his office, as the king, priest, and prophet of the church, as unto our acceptance with God, and in his worship; as the apostle directs, verse 15.

Τὸν ὀνειδισμὸν αὐτοῦ φέροντες. (4.) In our thus doing, we are "to bear his reproach." See for the exposition hereof, chap. 11:26, where the same thing is ascribed unto Moses. In brief, "the reproach of Christ," is either the reproach that was cast on his person, or the reproach that is cast on our persons for his sake. The first was in the cross, with all the shame, contempt, and reproach, wherewith it was accompanied. This was that great scandal at which the unbelieving world of Jews and Gentiles stumbled and fell. This reproach of Christ we bear, when we own him, believe in him, and make profession of his name; despising this reproach, through a spiritual view of the power of God and the wisdom of God in his cross. The reproach of Christ in the latter sense, is all that contempt, scorn, and despite, with revilings, which are cast upon us for our faith in him and profession of his name. See chap. 10:33, with the exposition. This we bear when we patiently undergo it, and are not shaken in our minds in what we suffer by it.

In these things consist the first general duties of our Christian profession, which we are called and directed unto by his offering himself, and the manner of it, namely, (1.) In a separation from all ways of religious worship not appointed by himself. (2.) In a relinquishment of all civil and political privileges which are inconsistent with the profession of the gospel. (3.) In avowing the wisdom, grace, and power of God in the cross, notwithstanding the reproaches that are cast upon it. (4.) In giving up ourselves unto him in the discharge of his whole office towards the church. (5.) In conformity unto him in self-denial and suffering. All which are comprised in this apostolical exhortation. And we may observe unto our own instruction,—

Obs. II. That if it was the duty of the Hebrews to forsake those ways of worship which were originally of divine institution, that they might wholly give up themselves unto Christ in all things pertaining unto God; much more is it ours to forego all such pretences unto religious worship as are of human invention. And,—

Obs. III. Whereas the camp contained not only ecclesiastical, but political privileges also, there ought to be a readiness to forego all civil accommodations also, in houses, lands, possessions, converse with men of the same nation, when we are called thereunto on the account of Christ and the gospel.

Obs. IV. If we will go forth unto Christ as without the camp, or separated from all the concerns of this world, we shall assuredly meet with all sorts of reproaches.

The sum of all is, that we must leave all, to go forth unto a crucified Christ.

2. An enforcement of this exhortation, or an encouragement unto this duty, the apostle adds in the next words.

Ver. 14.—"For we have here no continuing city, but we seek one to come."

See the exposition on chap. 11:10, 16.

The argument is taken from the consideration of the state of believers in this world, which is such as calls and directs them to go out of the camp unto Christ. This is our duty, seeing "we have here no continuing city," unless we intend to be without rest or refuge.

Two things are asserted in this description of the present state of believers: (1.) That "they have here no continuing city." (2.) That "they seek one to come." It seems, therefore, that a city is necessary unto all; and those who have none at present must seek for one to come. And,—

Ὧδε. (1.) It is declared, [1.] Where they have it not; not "here,"—that is, in this world, in this life. Their interest in the city of Jerusalem was gone after the Lord Jesus went out of the gate to suffer. And if it had continued, yet was not that an abiding city; for neither could they long continue in it, nor was itself to be of any long continuance, but was speedily to be destroyed.

Πόλιν. [2.] They had not a "city." A city is the centre of men's interests and privileges, the residence and seat of their conversation. Hereby are they freed from the condition of strangers and pilgrims; and have all that rest and security whereof in this world they are capable. For those who have no higher aims or ends than this world, a city is their all. Now it is not said of believers absolutely that they belonged to no city, had none that was theirs in common with other men; for our apostle himself pleaded that he was "a citizen of no mean city." And this is intimated, as we shall see, in the restriction of the assertion, "a continuing city." But it is spoken on other accounts.

1st. They had no city that was the seat of divine worship, whereunto it was confined, as it was before unto Jerusalem. This the Jews boasted of, and the apostle acknowledgeth that the Christians had none such. The Roman pretences of their sacred city were yet unforged.

2dly. They had no city wherein they did rest, or which was the seat of their polity or conversation; for that is in heaven, Phil. 3:20: not such a city as should give them their state and rest; the things which they did ultimately aim at: no such city as wherein their lot and portion did lie; such as by whose laws and rules their conversation was regulated.

Μένουσαν. 3dly. They had not an abiding city. Whatever conveniencies they might have here in this world for a season, yet they had no city that was to abide for ever, nor which they could for ever abide in.

And probably herein the apostle shows the difference and opposition between the state of the Christian church and that under the old testament. For they, after they had wandered in the wilderness and elsewhere for some ages, were brought to rest in Jerusalem; but saith he, 'With us it is not so; we have no city unto such an end; but we seek one that is to come.'

See the description of the state of pilgrimage here intended, in the exposition on chap. 11:9, 10, 13–16.

Ἐπιξητοῦμεν. (2.) The second thing in the description given of the present state of believers, is, that "they are seeking one [a city] to come." They are seeking after it, not as a thing unknown or hard to be found, but endeavouring to attain it, to come unto it. The use of the way and means unto this end is intended, and that with diligence and desire, as the words import.

Τὴν μέλλουσαν. And it was such a city they sought as they did not yet possess, nor could do so whilst they were in this world; it was one that was yet for to come, as unto them and their enjoyment of it: τὴν μέλλουσαν,—"that city;" not one indefinitely, but that city which was to be their eternal habitation. And it is said to be to come, not merely because it was future as unto their state and interest in it, but with respect unto their certain enjoyment of it on the account of divine designation and appointment. And it was, [1.] Prepared for them; and what belonged thereunto. See chap. 11:16. [2.] It was promised unto them. For in this city lies that eternal inheritance which was proposed in the promises from the foundation of the world. [3.] The way unto it was prescribed and directed in the scripture of the Old Testament, but now laid open and made plain by Jesus Christ, who "brought life and immortality to light by the gospel." In brief, it is the heavenly state of rest and glory which is intended by this "city." And we are taught herein,—

Obs. V. That believers are not like to meet with any such encouraging entertainment in this world, as to make them unready or unwilling to desert it, and to go forth after Christ, bearing his reproach.—For it is a motive in the apostle's reasoning unto a readiness for that duty, "We have here no continuing city."

Obs. VI. This world never did, nor ever will, give a state of rest and satisfaction unto believers.—It will not afford them a city. It is "Jerusalem above" that is the "vision of peace." "Arise and depart; this is not your rest."

Obs. VII. In the destitution of a present satisfactory rest, God hath not left believers without a prospect of that which shall be so unto eternity.—We have not, but we seek.

Obs. VIII. As God hath prepared a city of rest for us, so it is our duty continually to endeavour the attainment of it in the ways of his appointment.

Obs. IX. The main business of believers in this world is diligently to seek after the city of God, or the attainment of eternal rest with him; and this is the character whereby they may be known.

Ver. 15–17.—Having declared of what nature our altar is, and the fundamental points of our religion thence arising, namely, our faith in Christ Jesus, and the profession thereof, in readiness for the cross, and conformity unto him thereby, the apostle proceeds to declare the other necessary duty of our Christian profession, proceeding from the same cause, namely, the nature of our altar and sacrifice. And this he doth still in opposition unto those doctrines and observances about meats, and other things of an alike nature, which depended on the altar in the tabernacle with its institutions. And he reduceth all our Christian duties unto three heads, giving especial instances in each kind. Now, these are such as are, 1. Spiritual, with respect unto God; whereof he gives an instance, verse 15: 2. Moral, with respect unto men of all sorts; an instance whereof, comprehensive of all duties towards others, we have, verse 16: and, 3. Ecclesiastical, in the church-state whereinto we are called by the profession of the gospel; the principal duty whereof is instanced in, verse 17.

We have therefore in these verses, which are upon the matter the close of the epistle, so far as it is instructive, a summary of the whole duty of believers, and that cast under three heads, in a most proper order. For, beginning with that duty that doth immediately concern God himself, which contains the sum of the first table, he proceeds unto that towards men, which eminently contains those of the second; and so concludes with that duty which ariseth peculiarly from divine institution, which is superadded unto the other. It is not my business to insist at large on the things themselves, but only to open the words, and declare what is the mind of the Holy Ghost in them.

First, he proposeth the duty which we owe unto God immediately, on the account of our altar and sacrifice

Ver. 15.—Δι᾽ αὐτοῦ οὖν ἀναφέρωμεν θυσίαν αἰνέσεως διαπαντὸς τῷ Θεῷ, τοῦτ᾽ ἔστι καρπὸν χειλέων ὁμολογούντων τῷ ὀνόματι αὐτοῦ.

Ver. 15.—By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually; that is, the fruit of [our] lips, confessing to his name.

Οὖν. The words are an exhortation unto duty, by way of inference from what was before declared concerning the Lord Christ his sufferings and offering unto the sanctification of the people: "Therefore let us." Two things do follow on the due consideration thereof: 1. In general, the necessity of a return unto God in a way of duty, on the account of so great a mercy. Seeing we are sanctified and dedicated unto God, by the blood of Christ, it cannot be but that the duty of obedience unto God is required of us. 2. The especial nature of that duty, which is described in the words. And it is placed principally in "praise," as that which it naturally calleth for and constraineth unto; for thankfulness is the peculiar animating principle of all gospel obedience. And,—

Obs. I. Every act of grace in God, or love in Christ, towards us, is in its own nature obligatory unto thankful obedience.

The duty itself exhorted unto is expressed two ways: 1. Positively, "Let us offer the sacrifice of praise unto God continually." 2. Declaratively, as unto its especial nature, "That is, the fruit of our lips, confessing unto his name."

Ἀναφέρωμεν θυσίαν τῷ Θεῷ. 1. The duty exhorted unto in general, is offering sacrifice to God. What it is that he peculiarly intends the next words declare. But he thus expresseth it, (1.) To show what is the use of our altar, in opposition unto all the services of the altar in the tabernacle, which consisted in the offering of sacrifices; for we also having an altar, must have sacrifices to offer, without which an altar is of no use. (2.) To show the immediate end and object of all gospel worship; which is God himself, as he was of all sacrifices. None might be offered but to him alone. So,—

Obs. II. The religious worship of any creatures, under what pretence soever, hath no place in our Christian profession. And,—

Obs. III. Every act and duty of faith hath in it the nature of a sacrifice to God, wherewith he is well pleased.

2. The especial nature of this sacrifice is declared, in opposition unto the carnal sacrifices of the law; and that,—

Δι᾽ αὐτοῦ. (1.) In the only way and means of offering it; which is by Christ: "By him let us offer." All the sacrifices of the people under the law were offered by the priests: wherefore respect is here had unto Christ in the discharge of his

priestly office. How we come to God by him as our high priest, and offer our sacrifices by him, hath been fully declared in the exposition of chap. 4:14–16, 10:19–22. In brief, [1.] He sanctifies and dedicates our persons unto God, that we may be meet to offer sacrifices unto him. He "sanctifieth the people with his own blood," chap. 13:12; and makes us "priests unto God," Rev. 1:6; "an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable unto God by him," 1 Pet. 2:5. [2.] He hath prepared and made a way for our access with boldness into the holy place, where we may offer these sacrifices, Heb. 10:19–22. [3.] He "beareth the iniquity of our holy things," and makes our offerings acceptable through his merit and intercession. [4.] He continues to administer in the tabernacle of his own human nature all the duties and services of the church; offering them up unto God in our stead and on our behalf, Heb. 8:2; Rev. 8:3, 4. With respect unto these, and other the like acts of his mediation, we are said "by him" to offer this sacrifice to God; that is, under his guidance, trusting to him, relying on him, pleading his name and his grace for acceptance with God.

And "by him," is the same with by him alone. There is a profane opinion and practice in the papal church about offering our sacrifices of prayer and praise to God by others; as by saints and angels, especially the blessed Virgin. But are they our altar? Did they sanctify us by their blood? Did they suffer for us without the gate? Are they the high priests of the church? Have they made us priests unto God; or prepared a new and living way for our entrance unto the throne of grace? It is on the account of these things that we are said to offer our sacrifice by Christ; and it is the highest blasphemy to assign them unto any other. And,

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Obs. IV. The great, yea the only, encouragement which we have to bring our sacrifices unto God, with expectation of acceptance, lieth herein, that we are to offer them by him, who can and will make them acceptable in his sight. And,—

Obs. V. Whatever we tender unto God, and not by Christ, it hath no other acceptance with him than the sacrifice of Cain.

Αἰνέσεως (2.) In the especial nature of it; it is a "sacrifice of praise." Praise is not a concomitant, but the matter of the sacrifice intended. There were thank-offerings under the law, which were peculiarly accompanied with praises and thanksgivings; but the matter of them was the blood of beasts. But this is such a sacrifice as consisteth in praise only, exclusively unto any other matter of it.

The nature of gospel obedience consisting in thanksgivings for Christ and grace by him, the whole of it may be called a "sacrifice of praise." So the apostle describes it by "presenting our bodies" (that is, our persons) "a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God," as our "reasonable service," Rom. 12:1. But in the following description the apostle limits it unto the duties of worship, and our oral praising of God therein.

There were two things in the sacrifices of old: [1.] The mactation, killing, or shedding the blood, of the beast that was to be offered; [2.] The actual offering of the blood on the altar. And both these were required unto the completing of a sacrifice. The slaying or shedding the blood of a beast, wherever it was, was no sacrifice, unless the blood was offered on the altar; and no blood could be offered on the altar unless the beast was immediately slain at the altar in order thereunto. And there is a twofold spiritual sacrifice, in a resemblance hereunto, wherein our Christian profession doth consist. The first is of a broken spirit: "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit," Ps. 51:17. Repentance, in mortification and crucifying of the flesh, is the first Christian sacrifice. Herein we "present our bodies a living sacrifice unto God." See Rom. 6:13. This answers the mactation or killing of the beast for sacrifice, as it is the death and destruction of the flesh. The other is this sacrifice of praise; which answers the offering of the blood on the altar by fire with incense, yielding a sweet savour unto God. The other sacrifices, mentioned in the next verse, are so called from the general adjunct of acceptation, though God be not their immediate object, as we shall see.

There are sundry things observable in this exhortation of the apostle unto the offering of a sacrifice of praise, on the consideration of the Lord Christ as our altar and sacrifice, with the atonement made, and sanctification of the church thereby; as, [1.] The great obligation that is upon us of continual thankfulness and praise unto God on the account thereof. The sum and glory of our Christian profession is, that it is the only way of praising and glorifying God for his love and grace in the person and mediation of Christ. [2.] This obligation unto praise, succeeding into the room of all terrifying legal constraints unto obedience, alters the nature of that obedience from what was required under and by the law. [3.] Where the heart is not prepared for, and disposed unto, this fundamental duty of praising God for the death and oblation of Christ, no other duty or act of obedience is accepted with God.

(3.) Again, whereas the apostle confines our sacrifices unto praise, whereunto he makes an addition in the next verse of "doing good, and communicating," all which are metaphorical, it is evident that he excludeth all proper or

propitiatory sacrifices from the service of the church. Here had been a place, if anywhere, for the introduction of the sacrifice of the mass, if any such thing had been of divine institution. For whereas it pretends to be, not only a representation, but a repetition of the sacrifice of Christ, and the principal duty of the church on the consideration thereof; is it not strange, and that which evinceth it to be a mere human figment, that the apostle, proposing the consideration of that sacrifice on so high an occasion and in so eminent a manner, describing thereon the entire duty of the church, and what by virtue thereof is required of it, should not only not mention this mass and its sacrifice, but also determine the duties of the church unto things quite of another nature? It is indeed absolutely and peremptorily excluded out of Christian religion in this context of the apostle. For his design is to show that the one sacrifice of Christ hath put an end unto all other altars and sacrifices in the worship of God, establishing such a way of it as hath no relation unto them, yea, as is inconsistent with them. Certainly, had there been any such thing in the church, they of Rome have great reason to take it unkindly of him, that, treating so distinctly and at large of all the sacrifices of the law, and of their accomplishment in the one sacrifice of Christ, with the whole duty of the church thereon, he should not give the least intimation of this sacrifice of the mass, which was to succeed into the room of all them of old, but leave them absurdly to seek for a sorry pretence in the bread and wine which Melchizedek brought forth unto Abraham and his soldiers. But the truth is, he hath dealt yet more unkindly with them; for he hath so declared the nature of the sacrifice of Christ, its use and efficacy, as either it or the mass must be turned out of the church, for they are inconsistent.

Διαπαντός. (4.) This sacrifice of praise we are enjoined to offer "continually," διαπαντός: the same with πάντοτε, Luke 18:1, "to pray always;" and ἀδιαλείπτως, 1 Thess. 5:17, "without ceasing." And two things are included in it: [1.] Freedom from appointed times, seasons, and places. The sacrifices under the law had their times and places prescribed unto them, out of which they were not accepted; but as unto this of ours, every time and place is equally approved. For it may comprise places as well as times; from a distinction whereof we are freed by the gospel,—ἐν πάντι τόπω, 1 Cor. 1:2. [2.] Diligence and perseverance. This is that which we ought to attend unto and to abide in; that is, to do it continually, as occasions, opportunities, and appointed seasons, do require. A constant readiness of mind for it, with a holy disposition and inclination of heart unto it, acted in all proper seasons and opportunities, is enjoined us, And,—

Obs. VI. To abide and abound in solemn praise to God for Jesus Christ, his mediation and sacrifice, is the constant duty of the church, and the best character of sincere believers.

Τοῦτ᾽ ἐστι. (5.) In the last place, the apostle gives us a declaration of the nature of this sacrifice of praise, which he recommendeth unto us. 'It is,' saith he, 'or it consisteth in, "the fruit of our lips, confessing unto his name."'

Καρπὸν χειλέων. It is generally granted that this expression, "The fruit of our lips," is taken from Hos. 14:3, where the same duty is called פָּרִים שְׂפָתֵינוּ,—"the calves of our lips;" for the sense is the same in both places, and praise unto God is intended in them both. But the design of the apostle in alleging this place is peculiar. For the prophet is praying in the name of the church for mercy, grace, and deliverance; and hereon he declareth what is the duty of it upon an answer unto its prayers. Now whereas this, according to the institutions of the law, was to have been in vows and thank-offerings of calves and other beasts, he declares, that, instead of them all, vocal thankfulness, in celebrating the praise of God, should succeed. This he calls "the calves of our lips," because that the use of our lips in praise was to come into the room of all thank-offerings by calves. The psalmist speaks to the same purpose, Ps. 51:15, 16. But moreover, the mercy, grace, and deliverance which the prophet treats about in that place, were those which were to come by the redemption which is in Christ Jesus. After that there was to be no more sacrifice of calves, but spiritual sacrifices of praise only; which he therefore calls "the calves of our lips." The apostle therefore doth not only cite his words, but respects the design of the Holy Ghost in them, which was to declare the cessation of all carnal sacrifices, upon the deliverance of the church by the sacrifice of Christ. And he changeth the words from "calves" to "fruit," to declare the sense of the metaphor in the prophet.

Ὁμολογούντων τῷ ὀνόματι αὐτοῦ. And because there may yet be some ambiguity in that expression, "The fruit of our lips," which in general is the product and effect of them, he adds a declaration of its nature in these words, "Confessing unto his name:" our lips confessing; that is, we confessing by our lips. The Hebrew word יָדָה, which the LXX. usually render by ὁμολογέω, signifies "to praise," properly. But because the praise of God consisteth principally in the acknowledgment of his glorious excellencies and works, to "confess unto him,"—that is, so to profess and acknowledge those things in him,—is the same with praising of him. And the apostle chooseth to make use of this word in this place, because the praise which he intends did consist in the solemn

acknowledgment of the wisdom, love, grace, and goodness of God, in the redemption of the church by Jesus Christ. This is "confessing unto his name." Wherefore this is that which we are taught, namely, that—

Obs. VII. A constant solemn acknowledgment of the glory of God, and of the holy excellencies of his nature (that is, his name), in the work of the redemption of the church by the suffering and offering of Christ, is the principal duty of it, and the animating soul and principle of all other duties whatever.

This is the great sacrifice of the church, the principal end of all its ordinances of worship, the means of expressing our faith and trust in the blood or mediation of Christ, and of giving up that revenue of glory to God which in this world we are intrusted withal.

Ver. 16.—Τῆς δὲ εὐποιΐας καὶ κοινωνίας μὴ ἐπιλανθάνεσθε· τοιαύταις γὰρ θυσίαις εὐαρεστεῖται ὁ Θεός.

Ver. 16.—But [moreover] to do good and to communicate forget not, [of well-doing and communication, or distribution, be not forgetful]; for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.

From the first great instance of Christian duties on the account of the sanctification of the church by the blood of Christ, in those spiritual duties of worship whereof God himself is the immediate object, to manifest what influence it ought to have upon the whole of our obedience, even in things moral also, and the duties of the second table, he adds this exhortation unto them in such instances as are the spring of all mutual duties among ourselves, and towards mankind. And because he persisteth in his design of declaring the nature of gospel-worship and obedience, in opposition unto the institutions of the law, (which is his argument from the 9th verse;) he calls these duties also "sacrifices," upon the account of the general notion of being accepted with God, as the sacrifices were of old.

There is in the words, 1. A note of connection; 2. Duties prescribed; 3. An enforcement of the exhortation unto them.

Δέ 1. The first is in the particle δέ, "but." It is not here exceptive or adversative, as though something adverse unto what was spoken of is now prescribed; but it is only continuative, and may well be rendered "moreover." 'Unto the former duties add this also.' It may be, also, that the apostle doth prevent an evil that is apt to arise in the minds of men on this occasion. Having prescribed the great duty of divine worship,—of that acknowledgment of God

which compriseth all the actings of our souls whereof he is the immediate object,—some might think that this is the whole required of them, or that whilst they do attend thereunto they might be regardless of other things. To obviate this evil the apostle thus introduceth the injunction of this duty, "But;" that is, 'But yet, notwithstanding the diligence required in the other duty, forget not this.'

Obs. I. It is dangerous unto the souls of men when an attendance unto one duty is abused to countenance the neglect of another.—So may the duties of the first table be abused to the neglect of those of the other, and on the contrary. There is a harmony in obedience, and a failure in any one part disturbs the whole.

2. In the first part of the words, there is first the manner of the prescription of the duties intended; and then the duties themselves.

Μὴ ἐπιλανθάνεσθε. (1.) The manner of their prescription is, "Forget them not." See the exposition on verse 2, where the same phrase is used. But the apostle applying this caution unto this sort of duties, seems to intimate that there is a more than ordinary proneness in men to forget and neglect them. And it is not a natural, but a sinful forgetfulness that is prohibited. And this may arise from many vicious habits of mind: [1.] From an undue trust unto religious duties; as it doth in many barren professors of religion. [2.] From vain pleas and pretences against duties attended with trouble and charge, proceeding from self-love. [3.] A want of that goodness of nature and disposition which effectual grace will produce. [4.] A want of that compassion towards sufferers which is required in them that are themselves in the body, recommended verse 3. From these and the like corrupt inclinations may arise a sinful neglect and forgetfulness of these duties; which are therefore all to be watched against. Or there may be a meiosis in the expression; "Forget not;" that is, diligently attend unto these things. However, the warning is wholesome and useful, that we should not suffer a forgetfulness or neglect of these duties by any means to creep upon us, but be diligent in attending unto them on all occasions.

(2.) The duties themselves are two; the one more general, the other more particular.

Τῆς εὐποιΐας. [1.] The first is εὐποιΐα, "doing of good," well-doing. This concerns the whole course of our lives, that which in all things we ought to attend unto. "Patient continuance in well-doing" is the life of a believer, Rom. 2:7. This we are warned not to be weary of or faint in, Gal. 6:9; 2 Thess. 3:13; and it is commended unto us, 1 Pet. 2:15, 3:17, 4:19.

And this εὐποιΐα includeth in it three things: 1st. A gracious propensity and readiness of mind to do good unto all. "The liberal deviseth liberal things," Isa. 32:8. 2dly. The acting of this inclination in all ways and things, spiritual and temporal, whereby we may be useful and helpful unto mankind. 3dly. The embracing of all occasions and opportunities for the exercise of pity, compassion, and loving-kindness in the earth. It requires that the design of our lives, according unto our abilities, be to do good unto others; which is comprehensive of all the duties of the second table.

Hereon "vir bonus est commune bonum." This beneficence, in the acting of it, is the life, salt, and ligament of human conversation; without which the society of mankind is like that of beasts, yea, of devils. It is the glory of religion; nothing doth render it so honourable as its efficacy to make men good and useful. It is the great evidence of the renovation of our nature into the likeness and image of God, who is good, and doeth good unto all; a demonstration of altering our centre, end, and interest, from self to God.

For men to be unready unto this duty, the principle whereof ought to regulate them in the whole course of their lives,—not to embrace occasions cheerfully of exercising loving-kindness in the earth according to their ability, —is a representation of that image whereunto they are fallen in their departure from God. And nothing will be a greater relief to a man, in any calamity that may befall him in this world, than a satisfaction in his own mind that the design of his life hath been in all things, and by all ways, according to his ability and opportunities, to do good unto men.

Καὶ κοινωνίας. [2.] There is prescribed a particular instance of this beneficence, which on sundry accounts constitutes an especial duty in itself,— and that is "communication;" that is, a distribution of the good things we enjoy unto others, according as their necessities do require. It is beneficence restrained by its object, which is peculiarly the poor and indigent; and by its principle, which is pity and compassion. Κοινωνία is the actual exercise of that charity towards the poor, which is required of us in the distribution of good things unto them, according to our ability.

This is an important evangelical duty, which the Scripture everywhere gives us in charge, as that wherein the glory of God, the salvation of our own souls, with the honour of our profession, are highly concerned. To be negligent herein, is to despise the wisdom of God in the disposal of the lots and conditions of his own children in the world in so great variety as he hath done always, and will always continue to do. He doth it for the exercise of those graces in them which their several conditions call for: such are patience, submission, and trust, in the poor; thankfulness, bounty, and charity, in the rich. And where these graces are mutually exercised, there are beauty, order, and harmony, in this effect of divine wisdom, with a revenue of glory and praise unto himself. Good men are scarce ever more sensible of God than in giving and receiving in a due manner. He that gives aright, finds the power of divine grace in his heart; and lie that receives, is sensible of divine care and love in supplies: God is nigh to both. Wherefore to be negligent herein, is to despise the wisdom of God in his holy disposal of the various outward conditions of his children in this world. No man is rich or poor merely for himself, but to fill up that public order of things which God hath designed unto his own glory. But there is no end of what might be spoken on this head, or unto the necessity and excellency of this duty. And from the injunction of these duties we may observe, —

Obs. II. That the world itself, even in those that believe not, doth receive great advantage by the grace administered from the death of Christ, and its fruits, whereof the apostle treats.—For there is an obligation on them, and an inclination wrought in them, who are sanctified by his blood, to "do good unto all men," all manner of ways, as they are able. And there was a time when the world was filled with the fruits of it. Did all those who at this day profess the name of Christ, show forth the virtue of his mediation in these duties, as the profession of religion would be glorious, so the benefit which the world would receive thereby would be unspeakable.

Obs. III. That religion hath no relation unto the cross of Christ, which doth not incline and dispose men unto benignity, and the exercise of loving-kindness towards all.

Obs. IV. Much less hath that so which guides and disposeth its professors unto rage, cruelty, and oppression of others, on the account of an interest of its own.

Obs. V. We ought always to admire the glory of divine wisdom, which hath so disposed the state of the church in this world that there should be continual occasion for the exercise of every grace mutually among ourselves. For all the works of providence do serve the glory of God in the exercise of grace.

Obs. VI. Beneficence and communication are the only outward evidences and demonstrations of the renovation of the image of God in us.

Obs. VII. God hath laid up provision for the poor in the grace and duty of the rich; not in their coffers and their barns, wherein they have no interest. And in that grace lies the right of the poor to be supplied.

Τοιαύταις θυσίαις. 3. The observance of these duties the apostle presseth on them from this consideration, that "with such sacrifices God is well pleased." He persists in his way of calling our Christian duties by the name of "sacrifices;" and he doth it to confirm the cessation of all other sacrifices in the church, upon the accomplishment of the signification of them all in the sacrifice of Christ. But yet there is a peculiar reason for assigning this appellation unto moral duties, to be performed mutually among ourselves. For in every sacrifice there was a decrement unto the offerer. He was not to offer that which cost him nothing. Part of his substance was to be transferred from himself unto God. So is it in these duties: they cannot be duly observed, but there must be an alienation of what is ours, in time, in ease, in our substance, and a dedication of it unto God. Hence they have the general nature of sacrifices, as to cost and parting with our substance, or what is ours. So in the first recorded sacrifices of Cain and Abel, each of them gave somewhat of his own unto God; the one of the fruit of the ground, the other of the firstlings of the flock. In things of the like nature do these sacrifices much consist. But in general all things done for God, unto his glory, and accepted with him, may be so called.

Εὐαρεστεῖται ὁ Θεός. The force of the motive consists in this, that "with these sacrifices God is well pleased." The Vulg. Lat. renders the words, "promeretur Deus;" and the Rhem., "God is promerited:" with a barbarous word, and a false signification assigned unto it. And from their own feigned word those of the church of Rome dispute for the merit of good works; whereof, at least in their sense, there is nothing in the text, nor any thing to give the least countenance thereunto. The word is no more but "accepted," or "well approved of;" and being spoken of God, is his being well pleased with what is done; that is, his approbation of it.

Wherefore the apostle having called these duties "sacrifices," he expresseth God's respect unto them by a word signifying the act of his mind and will towards the sacrifices of old. So it is said he had "respect unto the offering of Abel," Gen. 4:4; that is, he approved of it and accepted it, as our apostle declares, Heb. 11:4. So, on the sacrifice of Noah, it is said that he "smelled a savour of rest," Gen. 8:21. It was well-pleasing unto him. And this frame of mind in God with respect unto those sacrifices doth the apostle express by this word, "Is well pleased." But there is also in the word a clear intimation of the especial pleasure of God in these things. This is that which he is well pleased withal in an especial manner. And hence we may learn,—

Obs. VIII. That the will of God revealed concerning his acceptance of any duties, is the most effectual motive unto our diligence in them.—Promise of acceptance gives life unto obedience.

Obs. IX. The works and duties which are peculiarly useful unto men, are peculiarly acceptable unto God.

Ver. 17.—Πείθεσθε τοῖς ἡγουμένοις ὑμῶν καὶ ὑπείκετε· αὐτοὶ γὰρ ἀγρυπνοῦσιν ὑπὲρ τῶν ψυχῶν ὑμῶν, ὡς λόγον ἀποδώσοντες· ἵνα μετὰ χαρᾶς τοῦτο ποιῶσι καὶ μὴ στενάζοντες· ἀλυσιτελὲς γὰρ ὑμῖν τοῦτο.

Ver. 17.—Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls as they that must give an account, that they may do it with joy, and not mourning; for that is unprofitable for you.

This is the third instance of duties required in our Christian profession on the account of the sacrifice of Christ, and our sanctification by his blood. And it is in things ecclesiastical, or gospel institutions. And some things are to be premised unto the exposition of the words.

1. There is a supposition of a settled church-state among them unto whom the apostle wrote; whereof he gave intimation, chap. 10:24, 25. For there were among them rulers, and those that were ruled; into which two sorts he distributes the whole. And he adds moreover their mutual duties in that church-state, and that distinctly, according to the office of the one and capacity of the other.

2. This epistle was written immediately to the community of the faithful, or body of the fraternity in the church, and that in distinction from their rulers or guides, as appeareth both in this place and verse 24. Hence all the duties contained in it are given in immediate charge unto them. So it was in those primitive times, when the church itself was intrusted with the care of its own

edification. But these things can scarce be accommodated unto the present state of most churches in the world, wherein the people as such have no interest in their own edification.

3. The especial duty here prescribed includes all that concerns church rule and order; for the springs of all things belonging thereunto lie in the due obedience of the church unto its rulers, and their due discharge of their office; —in them [it?] they also are enjoined. This, therefore, added unto the spiritual and moral duties before mentioned, gives us a summary of the whole duty of believers.

The words contain a prescription of a duty, with the ground or reason of it. In the first there is, (1.) The persons towards whom it is to be discharged; that is, their "rulers." (2.) The duty itself, whereof there are two parts: [1.] Obedience, "Obey them;" [2.] Submission, "And submit yourselves." In the second there are two things: (1.) The reason for the equity and necessity of this duty: and this is taken from a due discharge of their office and work, "They watch for your souls;" which is amplified from the consideration of their accountableness unto Christ for their office, "As those that must give an account." (2.) An enforcement of the reason itself, from the different ways of their giving account, with the different causes and events thereof, "That they may do it with joy," etc.

Τοῖς ἡγουμένοις ὑμῶν. 1. (1.) The persons towards whom the duty is prescribed, are "those that have the rule over them." Of the meaning of the word here used, see the exposition of verse 7 of this chapter. It signifies properly guides or leaders, though usually applied unto them that guide, feed, or lead with authority, or by virtue of office. But all the names given by the Holy Ghost unto those who preside in the church are exclusive of rigid authority, and pregnant with notions of spiritual care, duty, and benignity. Styles or titles of magisterial power, of earthly dignity, of rigid authority, are foreign to evangelical churches: 'Your guides, your leaders; who rule by rational guidance and conduct.'

These guides or rulers are those who are called the "elders" or "bishops" of the church. And,—

[1.] There were many of them in each church. For suppose that the apostle wrote this epistle directly and immediately unto all the churches in Judea (which yet he did not, but unto that at Jerusalem,) yet each of them must be supposed to have had more of these rulers of their own than one; for they are

directed to obey them that had the rule over them, and not over others; those that watched over their souls, and were to give an account of them. Here is no room left for a single bishop, and his rule in the church,—much less for a pope.

[2.] These rulers or guides were then of two sorts, as the apostle declares, 1 Tim. 5:17; first, such as together with rule laboured also in word and doctrine; and then such as attended unto rule only. And if this be not here allowed, let it be taken in the other sense, and then the two parts or duties of the same office, or teaching and ruling, are directed unto. For distinct respect is had unto them in the prescription of the duties here mentioned, as we shall see.

[3.] The grant of these guides unto the church, this office and its due discharge, being of necessity unto its edification, is an act of the authority of Christ, and an effect of his love and care, as our apostle declares at large, Eph. 4:8–16. And where those that take upon them so to be are useless, or obstructive as unto that end, they must bear their own judgment. This is certain, that in after ages the church owed its ruin unto its guides, who led it into a fatal apostasy.

[4.] The rulers or guides here intended were the ordinary elders, or officers of the church, which were then settled among them. For although probably one of the apostles was yet alive among them, yet it is plain that it is their ordinary officers, which had the peculiar rule of them, that are intended. And that there be such, more than one in every church, belongs unto the complete state and constitution of it.

(2.) There are two parts of the duty enjoined with respect unto these guides, and that with distinct respect unto the two parts of their office before mentioned, namely, of teaching and ruling.

Πείθεσθε. [1.] It is with respect unto their teaching, preaching, or pastoral feeding, that they are commanded to "obey them." For the word signifies an obedience on a persuasion; such as doctrine, instruction, or teaching, doth produce. And,—

Ὑπείκετε. [2.] The submission required, "Submit yourselves," respects their rule, 'Obey their doctrine, and submit to their rule.' And some things must be observed, to clear the intention of the apostle herein.

1st. It is not a blind, implicit obedience and subjection, that is here prescribed. A pretence hereof hath been abused to the ruin of the souls of men: but there is nothing more contrary to the whole nature of gospel obedience, which is our "reasonable service;" and in particular, it is that which would

frustrate all the rules and directions given unto believers in this epistle itself, as well as elsewhere, about all the duties that are required of them. For to what purpose are they used, if no more be required but that men give up themselves, by an implicit credulity, to obey the dictates of others?

2dly. It hath respect unto them in their office only. If those who suppose themselves in office do teach and enjoin things that belong not unto their office, there is no obedience due unto them by virtue of this command. So is it with the guides of the church of Rome, who, under a pretence of their office, give commands in secular things, no way belonging unto the ministry of the gospel.

3dly. It is their duty so to obey whilst they teach the things which the Lord Christ hath appointed them to teach; for unto them is their commission limited, Matt. 28:20: and to submit unto their rule whilst it is exercised in the name of Christ, according to his institution, and by the rule of the word, and not otherwise. When they depart from these, there is neither obedience nor submission due unto them. Wherefore,—

4thly. In the performance of these duties, there is supposed a judgment to be made of what is enjoined or taught, by the word of God, according to all the instructions and rules that are given us therein. Our obedience unto them must be obedience unto God.

5thly. On this supposition their word is to be obeyed and their rule submitted unto, not only because they are true and right materially, but also because they are theirs, and conveyed from them unto us by divine institution. A regard is to be had unto their authority and office-power in what they teach and do. And it is hence evident,—

Obs. I. That the due obedience of the church, in all its members, unto the rulers of it, in the discharge of their office and duty, is the best means of its edification, and the chief cause of order and peace in the whole body. Therefore is it here placed by the apostle as comprehensive of all ecclesiastical duties.

2. The ground of this duty, or the principal motive unto it, is taken from the office of these rulers, and their discharge of it.

Αὐτοὶ γάρ. (1.) "They watch for your souls, as they that must give account." 'Obey them, for they watch. Make the consideration hereof a motive unto your duty.'

Ἀγρυπνοῦσι. "They watch." The word used is peculiar unto this place, and it denotes a watchfulness with the greatest care and diligence, and that not without trouble or danger; as Jacob kept and watched the flocks of Laban in the night. Ὑπὲρ τῶν ψυχῶν ὑμῶν. And they did it "for their souls;" about them, concerning them and the things that belonged unto them; for their good, (so ὑπέρ frequently denotes the final cause),—that souls may be guided, kept, and directed, unto their present duty and future reward.

And the apostle compriseth herein the whole duty of the pastoral office, with the manner of its discharge. Wherein that duty doth consist, what are the principal parts and acts of it, I have elsewhere declared. Here the thing itself is intimated, but the manner of its discharge is principally intended;—that is, with design, care, and diligence; and that against troubles, dangers, and oppositions. As if it were said, 'The work and design of these rulers is solely to take care of your souls,—by all means to preserve them from evil, sin, backsliding; to instruct and feed them; to promote their faith and obedience; that they may be led safely to eternal rest. For this end is their office appointed, and herein do they labour continually.'

Where this is not the design of church rulers, where it is not their work and employment, where they do not evidence it so to be, they can claim no obedience from the church, by virtue of this rule. For the words here used are so a motive unto this obedience, as that they also contain the formal reason of it; because this watching belongs unto the essence of the office in the exercise of it, without which it is an empty name.

Obs. II. An assumption of right and power by any to rule over the church, without evidencing their design and work to be a watching for the good of their souls, is pernicious unto themselves, and ruinous unto the church itself.

On the other side; that all the members of the church may be kept in due obedience unto their guides, it is necessary that they always consider the nature of their office, and their discharge of it. When they find that the office itself is a divine institution for the good of their souls, and that it is discharged by their guides, with labour, care, and diligence, they will be disposed unto that obedience and submission which are required of them.

And herein consist the beauty and usefulness of church order, namely, when the guides of it do make it evident that their whole design is with labour and diligence to promote the eternal welfare of the souls of them that are

committed unto their care; and they, on the other hand, on the account hereof, do obey them in their doctrine, and submit unto them in their rule. Without this, all pretence of order is but confusion.

Ὡς λόγον ἀποδώσοντες. (2.) There is, moreover, an enforcement added unto this motive, from the consideration of the condition whereon they undertake this work of watching for their souls; namely, "As those that must give an account;" that is, of their office, work, duty, and discharge of it. So we render the words, "Those that must give an account;" referring it unto the last day of universal account. But respect is had also unto their present state and work; as,

—

[1.] They are in their office accountable persons; such as are obliged to account. They are not owners, but stewards; they are not sovereigns, but servants. There is a "great Shepherd of the sheep," verse 20; the "Prince of the shepherds," 1 Pet. 5:4; to whom they must give an account of their office, of their work, and of the flock committed to their charge.

[2.] They behave themselves as those that are so intrusted, and so accountable. This is included in the particle ὡς, "as those." And those who have an accountable office or work committed unto them, do act, 1st. With good boldness and confidence towards those that are under their care; for they are committed unto them by him who hath the sovereign power over them all, unto whom they must give an account. They are not afraid to be esteemed intruders, or to impose themselves unduly on others, in any acts or duties of their office. Stewards are bold in the honest management of things committed unto them. This gives them encouragement against all oppositions and reflections, as though they took too much upon them at any time. The remembrance of their trust and their account animates them unto their duty. 2dly. With care, diligence, and circumspection, and a continual regard unto the issue of things, and the trial which they must come unto. This the nature of the thing requires.

[3.] Although the last great account, which all church guides must give of their stewardship, may be intended, yet the present account which they give every day to Jesus Christ of the work committed to them, is included in it also. There are no conscientious church guides, but they do continually represent unto the Lord Christ the state of the flock committed unto them, and what is the success of their ministry among them. If they thrive, if they flourish, if they go on to perfection, this they give him an account of, blessing him for the work

of his Spirit and grace among them. If they are diseased, unthrifty, fallen under decays, or do any way miscarry themselves, therein also they give an account unto Jesus Christ; they spread it before him, mourning with grief and sorrow. And indeed the different ways of giving this account, with joy or sorrow, mentioned in the next words, seem to have respect hereunto.

Obs. III. Those who do attend with conscience and diligence unto the discharge of the work of the ministry towards their flocks, committed in an especial manner unto their charge, have no greater joy or sorrow in this world, than what accompanies the daily account which they give unto Christ of the discharge of their duty amongst them, as their success falls out to be.

[4.] The account, as was said, of the last day, when every shepherd shall be called on for his whole flock, by number and tale, is referred unto. But whereas this consists only in a solemn declaration and manifestation of what is done in this life, the present account is principally regarded, in the pressing of this duty. For the last clause of the words, "That is unprofitable for you," on the supposition of an account given with sorrow, can refer to no other account but that which is present, with respect unto the success of the ministry. And much of the life of the ministry and benefit of the church depends on the continual giving an account unto Christ, by prayer and thanksgiving, of the state of the church, and success of the word therein. Those guides who esteem themselves obliged thereunto, and do live in the practice of it, will find their minds engaged thereby unto constant diligence and earnest labouring in the discharge of their duty. And the dealings of Christ with the church itself are regulated according unto this account, as the last words do manifest. For,—

Lastly, The motive proposed unto obedience is further improved from the consideration of the frame of mind which is, or may be, in the guides of the church in giving this account; which wholly depends on the due observance or omission of the duty prescribed. For on the one they will give their account with joy, and on the other with sorrow. And as unto this latter frame it is added, "For that is unprofitable for you," the contrary is to be understood with respect unto the former, namely, that it is profitable for them. Now, this joy or sorrow wherewith they are affected in giving of their accounts, doth not respect themselves, or their own ministry; for they are "a sweet savour unto God, both in them that are saved, and in them that perish:" but it respects the church itself committed unto their guidance.

Ἵνα μετὰ χαρᾶς τοῦτο ποιῶσι. [1.] The duty is urged, "that they may give their account with joy." It is matter of the greatest joy unto the pastors of the churches, when they find the souls of them committed unto their charge thriving under their ministry. So was it with the apostles themselves. "I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth," saith one of them, 3 John 4. And another, "What is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming? For ye are our glory and joy," 1 Thess. 2:19, 20. And when they give their account with praise, it fills their hearts with joy in a particular manner. And this, on many accounts, is profitable for the church itself. They will quickly find the effects of the joy of their guides in their account, by the cheerful discharge of their ministry, and in tokens of Christ being well pleased with them.

Μὴ στενάζοντες. [2.] It is pressed, for the avoidance of the contrary frame herein; namely, "with grief," grieving or mourning. The sadness of the hearts of ministers of the gospel, upon the unprofitableness of the people under their ministry, or miscarriages of them, with respect unto church order and rule, is not easy to be expressed. With what sighing, what groaning, (as the word signifies,) what mourning, their accounts unto Christ are accompanied, he alone knows, and the last day will manifest. Ἀλυσιτελὲς γὰρ ὑμῖν τοῦτο. When it is thus, although they alone have the present burden and trouble of it, yet it is unprofitable for the people, both here and hereafter. It is, and will be so, in the discouragement of their guides, in the displeasure of Christ, and in all the severe consequents which will ensue thereon.

Hebrews 13: 18–25

Of the close of the epistle, which now only remains, there are three parts: 1. The apostle's request of the prayers of the Hebrews for himself, verses 18, 19; 2. His solemn benedictive prayer for them, verses 20, 21; 3. An account of the state of Timothy, with the usual salutation, verses 22–25. The first of these is contained in—

Ver. 18, 19.—Προσεύχεσθε περὶ ἡμῶν· πεποίθαμεν γὰρ ὅτι καλὴν συνείδησιν ἔχομεν, ἐν πᾶσι καλῶς θέλοντες ἀναστρέφεσθαι· περισσοτέρως δὲ παρακαλῶ τοῦτο ποιῆσαι, ἵνα τάχιον ἀποκατασταθῶ ὑμῖν.

Ver. 18, 19.—Pray for us: for we trust we have a good conscience, in all things willing to live honestly. But I beseech [you] the rather to do this, that I may be restored to you the sooner.

From these verses, and those that follow to the end, it is evident that the author of this epistle did not conceal himself from the Hebrews, neither was that the reason why his name was not prefixed unto it, as it is unto all his other epistles. For he plainly declares himself in all his circumstances, as one who was very well known unto them. But the true and only reason why he prefixed not his name and title unto this epistle, as unto all others, was because in them he dealt with the churches merely by virtue of his apostolical authority, and the revelation of the gospel which he had personally received from Jesus Christ; but dealing with these Hebrews, he lays his foundation in the authority of the scriptures of the Old Testament, which they acknowledged, and resolves all his arguments and exhortations thereinto. Hence he gave no title to the epistle, but immediately laid down the principle and authority which he would proceed upon, namely, the divine revelations of the Old Testament.

There are in the words, 1. A request made to the Hebrews for prayer; 2. The ground which gave him confidence therein, verse 18; 3. A pressing of the same request with respect unto his present state and design, verse 19.

Προσεύχεσθς περὶ ἡμῶν. 1. There is his request for prayer: "Pray for us." It is proposed unto them by the way of request, as is evident from the next words, "I beseech you the rather to do this." Their duty it was always to pray for him; but to mind them of that duty, and to manifest what esteem he had of it, he makes it a request, as we ought mutually to do among ourselves. He speaks in the plural number, "Pray for us, for we;" yet is it himself alone that he intends, as is usual.

And this request of their prayers argues a confidence in their faith and mutual love, without which he would not have requested their prayers for him. And he grants that the prayers of the meanest saints may be useful unto the greatest apostle, both with respect unto his person, and the discharge of his office. Hence it was usual with the apostle to desire the prayers of the churches to whom he wrote, 2 Cor. 1:11; Eph. 6:19; Col. 4:3; 2 Thess. 3:1. For in mutual prayer for each other consists one principal part of the communion of saints, wherein they are helpful to one another, in all times, places, and conditions. And he doth herein also manifest what esteem he had of them, whose prayers he thought would find acceptance with God on his behalf. And besides, it is the especial duty of the churches to pray for them who are eminently useful in the work of the ministry; which herein they are minded of.

Γάρ. 2. He expresseth the ground of his confidence in this request, namely, that he was such an one, and did so walk as that they might engage for him without hesitation. "For," saith he, "we trust." And we may observe in the words, —

Πεποίθαμεν. (1.) The manner of his proposal of this ground of his confidence. "We trust,"—'We are persuaded that so it is with us:' not as though there were any doubt or ambiguity in it, as it is ofttimes with us when we use that kind of expression; but he speaks of himself with modesty and humility, even in things whereof he had the highest assurance.

Καλὴν συνείδησιν. (2.) The thing itself is, that he had "a good conscience;" or, as he elsewhere expresseth it, "a conscience void of offence toward God and man." A sense thereof gives a due confidence both in our persons, and in our requests unto others for their prayers for us. So speaks the psalmist, "If I regard iniquity in my heart," (which is inconsistent with a good conscience,) "God will not hear me," Ps. 66:18. And on the other hand, "If our heart condemn us not," (that is, if we have this good conscience,) "then have we confidence toward God, and whatsoever we ask, we receive of him," 1 John 3:21, 22. And as sincerity in the testimony of a good conscience gives us confidence before God in our own prayers, notwithstanding our many failings and infirmities, so it is requisite in our requests for the prayers of others. For it is the height of hypocrisy to desire others to pray for our deliverance from that which we willingly indulge ourselves in, or for such mercies as we cannot receive without foregoing that which we will not forsake. This therefore the apostle here testifies concerning himself, and that in opposition unto all the reproaches and false reports which they had heard concerning him.

Θέλοντες ἐν πᾶσι. The testimony of his having a good conscience consists in this, that he was "willing in all things to live honestly." A will, resolution, and suitable endeavour, to live honestly in all things, is a fruit and evidence of a good conscience. Being willing, denotes readiness, resolution, and endeavour; and this extends to "all things;" that is, wherein conscience is concerned, or our whole duty towards God and men. The expression of "living honestly," as it is commonly used, doth not reach the emphasis of the original. A beauty in conversation, or exact eminency therein, is intended. Καλῶς ἀναστρέφεσθαι. This was the design of the apostle in all things; and ought to be so of all ministers of the gospel, both for their own sakes, as unto what is in an especial manner required of them, as also that they may be examples unto the people.

3. In the 19th verse he is further earnest in his request, with respect unto his present circumstances, and his design of coming in person unto them. Some few things may be observed therein; as, (1.) He had been with them formerly; as it is known that he had been partly at liberty, and partly in prison some good while, yea, for some years, at Jerusalem, and in other parts of Judea. (2.) He desires to be restored unto them; that is, to come unto them again, so as that they might have the benefit of his ministry, and he the comfort of their faith and obedience. (3.) He is earnest in this desire, and therefore the more urgent in requesting their prayers, that his desire might be accomplished. For, (4.) He knew that the Lord Christ did dispense the affairs of his church much according to their prayers, unto his own glory and their great consolation. Yet, (5.) It is uncertain whether ever this desire of his was accomplished or no; for this epistle was written after the close of the apostolical story in the Book of the Acts, and from thenceforward we have little certainty in matters of fact. For, (6.) According unto our present apprehensions of duty, we may lawfully have earnest desires after, and pray for such things as shall not come to pass. The secret purposes of God are not the rule of our prayers.

Ver. 20, 21.—Ὁ δὲ Θεὸς τῆς εἰρήνης, ὁ ἀναγαγὼν ἐκ νεκρῶν τὸν ποιμένα τῶν προβάτων τὸν μέγαν, ἐν αἵματι διαθήκης αἰωνίου, τὸν Κύριον ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν, καταρτίσαι ὑμᾶς ἐν παντὶ ἔργῳ ἀγαθῷ, εἰς τὸ ποιῆσαι τὸ θέλημα αὐτοῦ, ποιῶν ἐν ὑμῖν τὸ εὐάρεστον ἐνώπιον αὐτοῦ, διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ· ᾧ ἡ δόξα εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων. Ἀμήν.

Ver. 20, 21.—Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead that great shepherd of the sheep, our Lord Jesus Christ, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight through Jesus Christ, to whom [be] glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Having desired their prayers for him, he adds thereunto his prayer for them, and therewithal gives a solemn close to the whole epistle. A glorious prayer it is, enclosing the whole mystery of divine grace, in its original, and the way of its communication by Jesus Christ. And he prays for the fruit and benefit to be applied unto them of all that he had before instructed them in; for the substance of the whole doctrinal part of the epistle is included in it. And the nature and form of the prayer itself, with the expressions used in it, evidence its procedure from a spirit full of faith and love.

There are some things to be considered in this prayer, for the exposition of the words: 1. The title assigned unto God, suited unto the request to be made. 2. The work ascribed unto him, suitable unto that title. 3. The things prayed for. 4. A doxology, with a solemn closure of the whole.

Ὁ Θεὸς τῆς εἰρήνης. 1. The title assigned unto God, or the name by which he calls upon him, is, "The God of peace," So is he frequently styled by our apostle, and by him alone, Rom. 15:33, 16:20; Phil. 4:9; 1 Thess. 5:23. And he useth it only in a way of prayer, as shutting up all the instructions given the church in a prayer for a blessing from the God of peace. So also is he said to be the God of grace, mercy, and consolation; for he assumes names and titles to himself from his works, which are his alone, as well as from his essential attributes. And this is proper to him. For, (1.) All things were brought into a state of disorder, confusion, and enmity, by sin. No peace was left in the creation. (2.) There was no spring of peace left, no cause of it, but in the nature and will of God; which justifies this title. (3.) He alone is the author of all peace, and that two ways: [1.] He purposed, designed, and prepared it, in the eternal counsels of his will, Eph. 1:8–10. [2.] He is so in the communication of it, by Jesus Christ. So all peace is from him; with himself, in our own souls, between angels and men, Jews and Gentiles, all causes of enmity being taken away from the whole church.

And the apostle fixeth faith in prayer on this title of God, because he prays for those things which proceed from him peculiarly as the God of peace; such are, the glorious contrivance and accomplishment of our salvation by Jesus Christ and the blood of the covenant, with the communication of sanctifying grace unto the renovation of our natures unto new obedience, which are the matter of this prayer. These things are from God as he is the God of peace, who is the only author of it, and by them gives peace unto men. But he might have also herein an especial respect unto the present state of the Hebrews. For it is evident that they had been tossed, perplexed, and disquieted, with various doctrines and pleas about the law; and the observation of its institutions. Wherefore, having performed his part and duty, in the communication of the truth unto them, for the information of their judgments, he now, in the close of the whole, applies himself by prayer to the God of peace, that he, who alone is the author of it, who creates it where he pleaseth, would, through his instruction, give rest and peace unto their mind. For,—

Obs. I. When we make application unto God for any especial grace or mercy, it is our duty to direct and fix our faith on such names, titles, or properties of God, as whereunto that grace doth peculiarly relate, and from whence it doth immediately proceed. To this purpose precedents are multiplied in the Scripture. And,—

Obs. II. If this be the title of God, if this be his glory, that he is "the God of peace," how excellent and glorious is that peace from whence he is so denominated! which is principally the peace which we have with himself by Jesus Christ.

Obs. III. Because every thing that is evil unto mankind, in them all, amongst themselves, with reference unto things temporal and eternal, proceeding as it doth from our original loss of peace with God by sin, and the enmity which ensued thereon; peace, on the other side, is comprehensive of all that is good, of all sorts, here and hereafter; and God being styled "the God of peace," declares him to be the only fountain and cause of all that is good unto us in every kind.

2. The second thing in the words is the work that is ascribed unto God, as the God of peace. And this is, that "he brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus Christ, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant." Wherein we must consider, (1.) The person who is the object of this work; who is described, [1.] By his relation unto us, "Our Lord Jesus Christ;" [2.] By his office, "That great shepherd of the sheep." (2.) The work itself towards him, "He brought him again from the dead." (3.) The way whereby this work was wrought; it was "through the blood of the everlasting covenant."

Τὸν Κύριον ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦν Χριστόν. (1.) The person who is the object of this work, is "Jesus Christ, our Lord." This is he whom the apostle, after his long dispute, reduceth all unto, both as the object of the whole work of God's grace, as in this place; and the only means of the communication of it unto us, as in the close of the prayer. And,—

[1.] He expresseth him by his name, significant of his grace and office; and by his relation unto us, he is "our Lord." And it was towards him, as the anointed Saviour and our Lord, that the work mentioned was accomplished. For,—

Obs. IV. All the work of God towards Jesus Christ respected him as the head of the church, as our Lord and Saviour; and thence we have an interest in all the grace of it.

Τὸν ποιμένα τῶν προβάτων τὸν μέγαν. [2.] Again, he is described by his office, —under which consideration he was the object of the work mentioned,—"that great shepherd of the sheep." As such God brought him again from the dead. The expression in the original is emphatical, by a reduplication of the article, τὸν ποιμένα, τὸν μέγαν, which we cannot well express. And it is asserted, 1st. That Christ is a shepherd; that is, the only shepherd. 2dly. That he is the great shepherd. 3dly. That he is not so to all, but the shepherd of the sheep.

1st. He doth not say he is the great shepherd, but "that great shepherd;" namely, he that was promised of old, the object of the faith and hope of the church from the beginning,—he who was looked for, prayed for, who was now come, and had saved his flock.

Τὸν μέγαν. 2dly. He is said to be "great" on many accounts: (1st.) He is great in his person, above all angels and men, being the eternal Son of God; (2dly.) Great in power, to preserve and save his flock; (3dly.) Great in his undertaking, and the effectual accomplishment of it in the discharge of his office; (4thly.) Great in his glory and exaltation, above the whole creation. He is every way incomparably great and glorious. See our discourse of the Glory of Christ, in his Person, Office, and Grace. And,—

Obs. V. The safety, security, and consolation of the church, much depend on this greatness of their shepherd.

Τὸν ποιμένα. 3dly. He is the "shepherd of the sheep." They are his own. He was promised, and prophesied of, of old under the name of a shepherd, Isa. 40:11; Ezek. 34:23, 37:24. And that which is signified hereby is comprehensive of the whole office of Christ, as king, priest, and prophet of the church. For as a shepherd he doth feed, that is, rule and instruct it; and being that shepherd who was to lay down his life for the sheep, John 10:11, it hath respect unto his priestly office also, and the atonement he made for his church by his blood. All the elect are committed unto him of God, as sheep to a shepherd, to be redeemed, preserved, saved, by virtue of his office. This relation between Christ and the church is frequently mentioned in the Scripture, with the security and consolation which depend thereon. That which we are here taught is, that he died in the discharge of his office, as the "great shepherd of the sheep;" which expresseth both the excellency of his love and the certainty of the salvation of the elect. For,—

Τῶν προβάτων. He is not said to be a shepherd in general, but the "shepherd of the sheep." He did not lay down his life, as a shepherd, for the whole herd of mankind, but for that flock of the elect which was given and committed to him by the Father, as he declares, John 10:11, 14–16.

Obs. VI. On this relation of Christ unto the church doth it live and is preserved in the world.—In particular, this little flock of sheep could not be maintained in the midst of so many wolves and other beasts of prey as this world is filled withal, were it not by the power and care of this great shepherd.

Ο ἀναγαγὼν ἐκ νεκρῶν. (2.) The work of God toward him is, that he "brought him again from the dead." The God of peace is he who brought him again from the dead. Herein consisted his great acting towards the church, as he is the God of peace; and herein he laid the foundation of the communication of grace and peace unto us.

God, even the Father, is frequently said to raise Christ from the dead, because of his sovereign authority in the disposal of the whole work of redemption, which is everywhere ascribed unto him. And Christ is said to raise himself, or to take his life again when he was dead, because of the immediate efficiency of his divine person therein, John 10:18. But somewhat more is intended than that mere act of divine power whereby the human nature of Christ was quickened by a re-union of its essential parts, soul and body. And the word here used is peculiar, not signifying an act of raising, but of reducing or recovery out of a certain state and condition; that is, the state of the dead. Christ, as the great shepherd of the sheep, was brought into the state of death by the sentence of the law; and was thence led, recovered and restored, by the God of peace. Not a real efficiency of power, but a moral act of authority, is intended. The law being fulfilled and answered, the sheep being redeemed by the death of the shepherd, the God of peace, to evidence that peace was now perfectly made, by an act of sovereign authority brings him again into the state of life, in a complete deliverance from the charge of the law. See Ps. 16:10, 11.

Ἐν αἵματι διαθήκης αἰωνίου. (3.) Hence he is said to do this "through the blood of the everlasting covenant." "In the blood," ἐν for διά, which is frequent. And we must see, [1.] What "covenant" this is; [2.] What was "the blood of this covenant;" [3.] How "through it" the Lord Christ was brought again from the dead.

[1.] This covenant may be the eternal covenant between the Father and the Son about the redemption of the church, by his undertaking on its behalf. The nature hereof hath been fully declared in our Exercitations. But this covenant needed no confirmation or ratification by blood, as consisting only in the eternal counsels of Father and Son. Wherefore it is the covenant of grace, which is a transcript and effect of that covenant of redemption, which is intended. Hereof we have treated at large in our exposition of the 8th and 9th chapters. And this is called "everlasting," as in opposition unto the covenant made at Sinai, which, as the apostle proves, was but for a time, and accordingly waxed old, and was removed; so because the effects of it are not temporary benefits, but everlasting mercies,—grace and glory.

[2.] The blood of this covenant is the blood of Christ himself, so called in answer to the blood of the beasts, which was offered and sprinkled in the confirmation of the old covenant; whence it is by Moses called "the blood of the covenant," Exod. 24:8; Heb. 9:20. See that place, and the exposition. And it is called the blood of the covenant, because, as it was a sacrifice to God, it confirmed the covenant; and as it was to be sprinkled, it procured and communicated all the grace and mercy of the covenant, unto them who are taken into the bond of it.

[3.] But the principal inquiry is, how God is said to bring Christ from the dead "through the blood of the covenant," the shedding whereof was the means and the way of his entrance unto death. Now the mind of the Holy Ghost herein will appear in the ensuing considerations.

1st. By the blood of Christ, as it was the blood of the covenant, the whole will of God, as unto what he intended in all the institutions and sacrifices of the law, was accomplished and fulfilled. See chap. 10:5–9. And hereby an end was put unto the old covenant, with all its services and promises.

2dly. Hereby was atonement made for sin, the church was sanctified or dedicated to God, the law was fulfilled, the threatenings of death executed, eternal redemption obtained, the promises of the new covenant confirmed, and by one offering they who were sanctified are perfected for ever.

3dly. Hereon not only way was made for the dispensation of grace, but all grace, mercy, peace, and glory, were purchased for the church, and in the purpose of God were necessarily to ensue. Now the head and well-spring of the whole dispensation of grace, lies in the bringing of Christ again from the dead. That is the beginning of all grace to the church; the greatest and first instance

of it, and the cause of all that doth ensue. The whole dispensation of grace, I say, began in, and depends on, the resurrection of Christ from the dead; which could not have been, had not the things before mentioned been effected and accomplished by the blood of the covenant. Without them he must have continued in the state and under the power of death. Had not the will of God been satisfied, atonement made for sin, the church sanctified, the law accomplished, and the threatenings satisfied, Christ could not have been brought again from the dead. It was therefore hereby that he was so, in that way was made for it unto the glory of God. The death of Christ, if he had not risen, would not have completed our redemption, we should have been "yet in our sins;" for evidence would have been given that atonement was not made. The bare resurrection of Christ, or the bringing him from the dead, would not have saved us; for so any other man may be raised by the power of God. But the bringing again of Christ from the dead, "through the blood of the everlasting covenant," is that which gives assurance of the complete redemption and salvation of the church. Many expositors have filled this place with conjectures to no purpose, none of them so much as looking towards the mind of the Holy Ghost in the words. That which we learn from them is,—

Obs. VII. That the bringing back of our Lord Jesus Christ, as the shepherd of the sheep, from the state of the dead, through the blood of the covenant, is the great pledge and assurance of peace with God, or the effecting of that peace which the God of peace had designed for the church.

Obs. VIII. The reduction of Christ from the dead, by the God of peace, is the spring and foundation of all dispensations and communications of grace to the church, or all the effects of the atonement and purchase made by his blood.—For he was so brought again, as the shepherd of the sheep, unto the exercise of his entire office towards the church. For hereon followed his exaltation, and the glorious exercise of his kingly power in its behalf, with all the benefits which ensue thereon, Acts 5:30, 31, Rom. 14:9, Phil. 2:8–11, Rev. 1:17, 18; and the completing of his prophetical office, by sending of his Holy Spirit to abide always with the church, for its instruction, Acts 2:33; and the discharge of what remains of his priestly office, in his intercession, Heb. 7:25, 26, and his ministering in the sanctuary, to make the services of the church acceptable unto God, Heb. 8:2; Rev. 8:3, 4. These are the springs of the administration of all mercy and grace unto the church, and they all follow on his reduction from the dead as the shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the covenant.

Obs. IX. All legal sacrifices issued in blood and death; there was no recovery of any of them from that state.—There was no solemn pledge of their success. But their weakness was supplied by their frequent repetition.

Obs. X. There is, then, a blessed foundation laid of the communication of grace and mercy to the church, unto the eternal glory of God.

Ver. 21.—The other verse contains the things which the apostle, with all this solemnity, prayeth for on the behalf of the Hebrews. And they are two: 1. That "God would perfect them in every good work to do his will." 2. That "he would work in them that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ."

In this whole prayer we have the method of the dispensation of grace laid before us. For, (1.) The original of it is in God himself, as he is "the God of peace;" that is, as in the eternal counsel of his will he had designed grace and peace to poor sinners, suitably unto his own goodness, wisdom, and grace. (2.) The preparation of it, in a way suitable unto the exaltation of the glory of God, and the original means of its communication, is the mediation of Christ in his death and resurrection. (3.) The nature of it, as unto one principal part, or our sanctification, is expressed under these two heads in this verse.

Again, it is evident that this communication of grace here prayed for consists in a real efficiency of it in us. It is here expressed by words denoting not only a certain efficacy, but a real actual efficiency. The pretence of some, that the eventual efficacy of divine grace depends on the first contingent compliance of our wills, which leaves it to be no more but persuasion or instruction, is irreconcilable unto this prayer of the apostle. It is not a sufficient proposal of the object, and a pressing of rational motives thereon, but a real efficiency of the things themselves, by the power of God through Christ, that the apostle prays for.

Καταρτίσαι ὑμᾶς. 1. The first part of the prayer, the first thing prayed for us, is, "Perfection in every good work to do the will of God."

"Make you perfect;" or rather, "make you meet," fit and able. 'This is a thing which you in yourselves are no way meet, fit, prepared, able for; whatever may be supposed to be in you of light, power, liberty, yet it will not give you this meetness and ability.' It is not an absolute perfection that is intended, nor doth the word signify any such thing; but it is to bring the faculties of the mind into that order, so to dispose, prepare, and enable them, as that they may work accordingly.

Ἐν παντὶ ἔργῳ ἀγαθῷ, εἰς τὸ ποιῆσαι τὸ θέλημα αὐτοῦ. And this is to be "in every good work;" in, for, unto every good work, or duty of obedience. The whole of our obedience towards God, and duty towards man, consists in good works, Eph. 2:10. And therefore the end of the assistance prayed for is, that they might do the will of God, which is the sole rule of our obedience.

It is hence evident what is the grace that in these words the apostle prayeth for. In general, he designs the application of the grace of God through the mediation of Christ unto our sanctification. And this adapting of us to do the will of God in every good work, is by that habitual grace which is wrought in our souls. Hereby are they prepared, fitted, enabled, unto all duties of obedience. And whereas many, at least of the Hebrews, might justly be esteemed to have already received this grace, in their first conversion unto God, as all believers do, the daily increase of it in them, whereof it is capable, is that which on their behalf he prayeth for. For all this strengthening, thriving, and growing in grace, consists in the increase of this spiritual habit in us.

He lets therefore the Hebrews know, that in themselves they are unable to answer the will of God in the duties of obedience required of them; and therefore prays that they may have supplies of sanctifying grace enabling them thereunto. And he doth it after he hath in particular prescribed and enjoined sundry gospel duties unto them, in this and the foregoing chapter; and it may be with especial regard unto the casting out of all contentious disputes about the law, with a holy acquiescency in the doctrine of the gospel; which he therefore prays for from "the God of peace."

2. But there is yet more required in us besides this habitual disposition and preparation for duties of obedience, according to the will of God; namely, the actual gracious performance of every such duty. For neither can we do this of ourselves, whatever furniture of habitual grace we may have received. This therefore he hath also respect unto: "Working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ." This is the way whereby we may be enabled effectually to do the will of God.

Τὸ εὐάρεστον ἐνώπιον αὐτοῦ. Our whole duty, in all the acts of it, according to his will, is "that which is well-pleasing unto him," (so is it expressed, Rom. 12:1, 14:18; Eph. 5:10; Phil. 4:18),—that which is right in his eyes, before him, with respect unto the principle, matter, forms, and end of what is so done. This we are not sufficient for in ourselves, in any one instance, act, or duty.

Ποιῶν ἐν ὑμῖν. Therefore he prayeth that God would do it, work it, effect it, in them; not by moral persuasion and instruction only, but by an effectual inworking, or working in them. See Phil. 2:13. The efficiency of actual grace in and unto every acceptable act or duty of obedience, cannot be more directly expressed. This the church prays for; this it expects and relies upon. Those who judge themselves to stand in no need of the actual efficiency of grace in and unto every duty of obedience, cannot honestly give their assent and consent unto the prayers of the church.

Διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ. He prays that all maybe granted unto them "through Jesus Christ." This may be referred either to working or to acceptance. If it be so to the latter, the meaning is, that the best of our duties, wrought in us by the grace of God, are not accepted as they are ours, but upon the account of the merit and mediation of Christ: which is most true. But it is rather to be referred unto the former; showing that there is no communication of grace unto us from the God of peace, but in and by Jesus Christ, and by virtue of his mediation; and this the apostle presseth in a peculiar manner upon the Hebrews, who seem not as yet to be fully instructed in the things which belong unto his person, office, and grace.

Ὧ ἡ δόξα εἰς τοὺς αἰώνας τῶν αἰώνων. Ἀμήν. 3. The close of the words, and so of the epistle, is, an ascription of glory to Christ: "To whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen." So 1 Tim. 1:17; 2 Tim. 4:18. So is it jointly to the Father and the Son, as mediator, Rev. 5:13. See Gal. 1:5. And wherein this assignation of glory to Christ doth consist is there fully declared. And whereas it contains divine adoration and worship, with the ascription of all glorious divine properties unto him, the object of it is his divine person, and the motive unto it is his work of mediation, as I have elsewhere at large declared. All grace is from him, and therefore all glory is to be ascribed to him.

As this is due, so it is to be given unto him "for ever and ever." The expression of εἰς τοὺς αἰώνας τῶν αἰώνων, "in secula seculorum," is taken from the Hebrew, עוֹלָם וָעֶד, Ps. 10:16; מִן־הָעוֹלָם עַד־הָעוֹלָם, Nehem. 9:5; or לְעַד לְעוֹלָם, Ps. 148:6; —"unto eternity," "without intermission," "without end."

Hereunto is added the solemn note of assent and attestation, frequently used both in the Old and New Testament, as in this case, Rom. 16:27: "So it is, so let it be, so it ought to be, it is true, it is right and meet that so it should be,"—"Amen."

Thus shall the whole dispensation of grace issue in the eternal glory of Christ. This the Father designed; this is the blessedness of the church to give unto him, and behold; and let every one who says not amen hereunto, be anathema Maran-atha.

This the apostle hath brought his discourse unto with these Hebrews, that laying aside all disputation about the law and expectations from it, all glory, the glory of all grace and mercy, is now, and eternally, to be ascribed to Jesus Christ alone. Of the nature of this glory, and the manner of its assignation to him, see my discourse of the Mystery of Godliness, where it is handled at large.

And unto Him doth the poor unworthy author of this Exposition desire, in all humility, to ascribe and give eternal praise and glory, for all the mercy, grace, guidance, and assistance, which he hath received from Him in his labour and endeavours therein. And if any thing, word, or expression, through weakness, ignorance and darkness, which he yet laboureth under, have passed from him that doth not tend unto His glory, he doth here utterly condemn it. And he humbly prays, that if, through His assistance, and the guidance of His Holy Spirit of light and truth, any thing have been spoken aright concerning Him, His office, His sacrifice, His grace, His whole mediation, any light or direction communicated unto the understanding of the mind of the Holy Ghost in this glorious scripture, He would make it useful and acceptable unto His church, here and elsewhere. And he doth also humbly acknowledge His power, goodness, and patience, in that, beyond all his expectations, He hath continued his life under many weaknesses, temptations, sorrows, tribulations, to bring this work unto its end. To Him be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

This is the solemn close of the epistle. What follows are certain additional postscripts, which were usual with our apostle in his other epistles; and we shall briefly give an account of them.

Ver. 22.—Παρακαλῶ δὲ ὑμᾶς, ἀδελφοὶ, ἀνέχεσθε τοῦ λόγου τῆς παρακλήσεως· καὶ γὰρ διὰ βραχέων ἐπέστειλα ὑμῖν.

Ver. 22.—And I beseech you, brethren, suffer the word of exhortation; for I have written a letter unto you in few words.

The apostle knew that many of the Hebrews were not without great prejudices in the cause wherein he had been dealing with them; as also, that he had been necessitated to make use of some severe admonitions and reprehensions. Having therefore finished his discourse, he adds this word, both

in his own justification as unto what he had written, and to caution them that they lost not the benefit of it through negligence or prejudice. And he gives this caution with great wisdom and tenderness,—

Ἀδελφοί. 1. In his kind compellation by the name of "brethren," denoting, (1.) His near relation unto them, in nature and grace; (2.) His love unto them; (3.) His common interest with them in the cause in hand: all suited to give an access unto his present exhortation. See chap. 3:1, with the exposition.

Τοῦ λόγου τῆς παρακλήσεως. 2. In calling his discourse, or the subject-matter of his epistle, τὸν λόγον τῆς παρακλήσεως, "a word of exhortation," or "of consolation;" for it is used to signify both, sometimes the one, and sometimes the other, as hath been declared before by instances. Wherefore λόγος παρακλήσεως is the truth and doctrine of the gospel applied unto the edification of believers, whether by way of exhortation or consolation, the one of them constantly including the other. Most think that the apostle intends peculiarly the hortatory part of the epistle, in chapters 6, 10, 12, 13; for therein are contained both prescriptions of difficult duties, and some severe admonitions, with respect whereunto he desires that they would "bear" or "suffer it," as that which had some appearance of being grievous or burdensome. But I see no just reason why the whole epistle may not be intended; for, (1.) The nature of it in general is parenetical or hortatory; that is, a "word of exhortation," as hath been often showed. (2.) The whole epistle is intended in the next words, "For I have written a letter unto you in few words." (3.) There is in the doctrinal part of it that which was as hard to be borne by the Hebrews as any thing in those which are preceptive or hortatory. Wherefore, the whole of it being a "word of exhortation," or a "consolatory exhortation," he might use it with confidence, and they bear it with patience. And I would not exclude the notion of "consolation," because that is the proper effect of the doctrine of the gospel, delivering men from bondage unto the ceremonies of the law; which is the design of the apostle in this whole epistle. See Acts 15:31.

Obs. And when ministers take care that the word which they deliver is a word tending unto the edification and consolation of the church, they may with confidence press the entertainment of it by the people, though it should contain things, by reason of their weakness or prejudices, some way grievous unto them.

Ἀνέχεσθε. 3. In persuading them to "bear," or "suffer" this word; that is, in the first place, to take heed that no prejudices, no inveterate opinions, no apprehension of seventy in its admonitions and threatenings, should provoke them against it, render them impatient under it, and so cause them to lose the benefit of it. But there is more intended, namely, that they should bear and receive it as a word of exhortation, so as to improve it unto their edification. A necessary caution this is for these Hebrews, and indeed for all others unto whom the word is preached and applied with wisdom and faithfulness; for neither Satan nor the corruptions of men's own hearts will be wanting to suggest unto them such exceptions and prejudices against it as may render it useless.

Καὶ γὰρ διὰ βραχέων ἐπέστειλα ὑμῖν. 4. He adds the reason of his present caution, "For I have written a letter unto you in few words." There are two things in the words warranting his caution: (1.) That out of his love and care towards them he had written or sent this epistle to them; on the account whereof they ought to bear with him and it. (2.) That he had given them no more trouble than was necessary, in that he had "written in a few words."

Some inquiry is made why the apostle should affirm that he wrote this epistle "briefly," or "in few words," seeing it is of a considerable length,—one of the longest he ever wrote. A few words will satisfy this inquiry. For considering the importance of the cause wherein he was engaged; the necessity that was on him to unfold the whole design and mystery of the covenant and institutions of the law, with the office of Christ; the great contests that were amongst the Hebrews about these things; and the danger of their eternal ruin, through a misapprehension of them; all that he hath written may well be esteemed but a "few words," and such as whereof none could have been spared. He hath in this matter written διὰ βραχέων, or given us a brief compendium, as the words signify, of the doctrine of the law and the gospel; which they ought to take in good part.

Ver. 23.—Γινώσκετε τὸν ἀδελφὸν Τιμόθεον ἀπολελυμένον, μεθ᾽ οὗ ἐὰν τάχιον ἔρχηται ὄψομαι ὑμᾶς.

Ver. 23.—Know ye that [our] brother Timothy is set at liberty; with whom, if he come shortly, I will see you.

Who this Timothy was, what was his relation unto Paul, how he loved him, how he employed him, and honoured him, joining him with himself in the salutation prefixed unto some of his epistles, with what care and diligence he wrote unto him with reference unto his office of an evangelist, is known out of

his writings. This Timothy was his perpetual companion in all his travels, labours, and sufferings, "serving him as a son serveth his father," unless when he designed and sent him unto any especial work for the church. And being with him in Judea, he was well known unto them also; as were his worth and usefulness. He seems not to have gone to Rome with Paul, when he was sent thither a prisoner, but probably followed him not long after. And there, as it is most likely, being taken notice of, either as an associate of the apostle's, or for preaching the gospel, he was cast into prison. Hereof the Hebrews had heard, and were no doubt concerned in it, and affected with it. He was at this present dismissed out of prison; whereof the apostle gives notice unto the Hebrews, as a matter wherein he knew they would rejoice. He writes them the good news of the release of Timothy. He doth not seem to have been present with the apostle at the despatch of this epistle, for he knew not his mind about his going into Judea directly; only, he apprehended that he had a mind and resolution so to do. And hereon he acquaints them with his own resolution to give them a visit; which that he might do he had before desired their prayers for him. However, he seems to intimate that, if Timothy, whose company he desired in his travels, could not come speedily, he knew not whether his work would permit him to do so or no. What was the event of this resolution, God only knows.

Ver. 24.—Ἀσπάσασθε πάντας τοὺς ἡγουμένους ὑμῶν καὶ πάντας τοὺς ἁγίους. Ἀσπάζονται ὑμᾶς οἱ ἀπὸ τῆς Ἰταλίας.

Ver. 24.—Salute all them that have the rule over you, and all the saints. They of Italy salute you.

This is given in charge unto them to whom the epistle was sent and committed. For although it was written for the use of the whole church, yet the messengers by whom it was carried, delivered and committed it, according to the apostle's direction, unto some of the brethren; by whom it was to be presented and communicated unto the church. These he speaks unto peculiarly in this postcript, giving them in charge to salute both their rulers and all the rest of the saints, or members of the church, in his name. To salute in the name of another, is to represent his kindness and affection unto them. This the apostle desires, for the preservation and continuation of entire love between them.

Who these rulers were whom they are enjoined to salute, hath been fully declared on verse 17; and all the rest of the members of the church are called "the saints," as is usual with our apostle. Such rulers and such members did constitute blessed churches.

He adds, to complete this duty of communion in mutual salutation, the performance of it by those that were with him, as well as by himself: "They of Italy salute you." They did it by him, or he did it unto the whole church by them. Hence it is taken for granted that Paul was in Italy at the writing of this epistle. But it is not unquestionably proved by the words. For οἱ ἀπὸ τῆς Ἰταλίας may as well be, "those who were come to him out of Italy," as "those that were with him in Italy." But in Italy there were then many Christians, both of Jews and Gentiles. Some of these, no doubt, were continually with the apostle; and so knowing his design of sending a letter to the Hebrews, desired to be remembered unto them; it being probable that many of them were their own countrymen, and well known unto them.

Ver. 25.—Ἡ χάρις μετὰ πάντων ὑμῶν. Ἀμήν.

Ver. 25.—Grace [be] with you all. Amen.

This was the constant close of all his epistles. This he wrote with his own hand, and would have it esteemed an assured token whereby an epistle might be known to be his, 2 Thess. 3:17, 18. He varieth sometimes in his expressions, but this is the substance of all his subscriptions, "Grace be with you all." And by "grace" he intends the whole good-will of God by Jesus Christ, and all the blessed effects of it, for whose communication unto them he prays herein.

The subscription in our books is, Πρὸς Ἑβραίους ἐγράφη ἀπὸ τῆς Ἰταλίας διὰ Τιμοθέου,—"Written to the Hebrews from Italy by Timothy." This is partly uncertain, as that it was written from Italy; and partly most certainly untrue, as that it was sent by Timothy, as expressly contrary unto what the apostle speaks concerning him immediately before. But these subscriptions have been sufficiently proved by many to be spurious, being the additions of some unskilful transcribers in after ages.