THE WORKS
OF THE
REV. P. DODDRIDGE, D. D.
VOLUME VIII.

THE FAMILY EXPOSITOR:
CONTAINING
A PARAPHRASE ON THE REMAINING PART
OF THE
ACTS OF THE APOSTLES;
THE EPISODE OF
ST. PAUL TO THE ROMANS
AND PART OF THE
FIRST EPISODE TO THE CORINTHIANS.

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THE nature and design of this work, and the principles on which it hath been undertaken and conducted, have been so largely represented in the preceding volumes, that it is unnecessary here to enlarge upon them. But, as what I now present to the reader concludes the historical part of the New Testament, this seems a proper place to recollect the promise which I long since made, of offering some remarks on the excellence and usefulness of that history, which may dispose the reader more frequently to review it, and to study it with the greater application.

It must be universally granted, that the excellence of any performance is to be estimated, by considering its design, and the degree in which it is calculated to answer it. The design of the gospel history is summed up in the words which I have placed for my motto; which, though they are taken from the conclusion of St John's gospel, are applicable, not only to all the other Evangelists, but likewise to the Acts of the Apostles, that invaluable appendix to them. These things are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.

I shall beg leave to shew, how admirably the history before us is calculated to answer both these ends, viz. to produce a conviction of the truth of Christianity, and to make those good impressions on the heart, which may secure the eternal life, and happiness of the reader; which no speculative conviction; even of the most sublime, comprehensive, and important truths, will itself be able to do. I apprehend, that, in proportion to the degree in which these two premises can be illustrated, the excellence and value of this history will immediately appear; for no man is so far infatuated as to dispute, whether obtaining life, eternal life, be an end of the highest importance; how light soever he may in fact make of it, and how wantonly soever he may barter it away for every trifle, that strikes his imagination, or fires his passions. Obvious as the hints are which occur on these heads, I will touch a little upon them; that we may more evidently see, how much we are indebted to the Divine Wisdom and goodness in giving us so invaluable a treasure as these books contain, and how highly we are concerned to attend diligently to the contents of them.

First, Every intelligent reader of this evangelical history must have seen, that it is admirably adapted to produce and support in all attentive and impartial minds a strong conviction of the truth of Christianity, and by consequence of the divine glories of Jesus the Christ, as the Son of God.

It is evident, that our most material arguments for the demonstration of the truth of Christianity are drawn from miracles from prophecies from the character of its founders, and from the genius of the religion itself. Now though all these receive great illustration from the epistolary parts of the New Testament, and

* As the first edition was printed in Six Volumes, the Third Volume began with the first chapter of the Acts, and concluded with that book.

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and some of them, especially the second, from the Old; yet it is certain, that
the grand basis and foundation of them all is what we read in the history of
Christ and his apostles. There we are informed of the miracles which they
wrought, of the character they maintained, and of the system of religion which
they published to the world; and the application of the Old Testament prop-
hecies to Jesus of Nazareth is beyond all controversy to be justified chiefly
from what we find there:

These books do in the most authentic manner, as we have demonstrated
elsewhere, shew us, who Jesus of Nazareth was, and what he professed himself
to be. They give us an account of the very high pretensions he made to an
immediate mission from God, and to a most intimate relation to him, as his
Son in a peculiar and appropriate sense not communicable to any other. They
give us also, as in this connection it is very fit they should, a very large and
circumstantial narration of a variety of miracles which he wrought. Their
number appears to be very great; so that a late writer, who has considered
them very accurately, reckons up sixty-nine relating to particular persons,
besides twenty other instances, in all of which several, and in most of them
multitudes, yea frequently great multitudes, are mentioned, not merely as the
spectators, but as the objects of his miraculous power, which must on the
most moderate computation arise to many hundreds; not to mention those yet
more numerous miracles which were performed by his apostles in his name,
wherever they came, especially after the descent of the Holy Ghost upon them;
or the variety of supernatural gifts and powers with which they were endow-
ed, and which in many thousands of instances they communicated to others.

It is farther to be recollected here, that these miracles were not of such a
kind as to leave any room for a doubt, whether they lay within the natural
efficacy of second causes, or not; since the most hopeless and inveterate
diseases gave way, not merely to some trivial application of means, whether
internal or external, but to a touch or a word; and death itself obeyed the
voice of Jesus and of his servants speaking by his authority.

Now I could wish that any one who feels himself inclined to scepticism with
regard to christianity, would sit down and read over any one of the evangelists
in this particular view: That he would take the stories of the several miracles
in their succession, and after having attentively weighed them, would ask his
own heart, whether, if he had seen such facts as these, he would not imme-
diately have been convinced in his own conscience, that this was indeed the
seal of heaven set to the commission of the person who performed them; and
consequently, whether if these things were really done by Jesus and his mis-
sionaries, in his name, he must not be compelled to acknowledge, that chri-

tianity is true. Let any impartial and rational man in the world judge,
whether if an impostor had arisen, falsely and blasphemously arrogating to
himself the high titles of the Son of God, and Saviour of men, God would
have honoured his lips with this wonderful power over diseases and death, or
his dead body after a public execution with a resurrection: that is, in one
word, whether he would have interposed to give such credit to him, as it is not
pretened he hath ever given, in any other instance, to the best of men in the
best of causes. Every man's heart will surely tell him, with the circum-
stances of such facts full in his view, that the only question is, whether they
be themselves credible; and that, if this be allowed the divine attestation to
the authority of such a teacher follows, by a connection which can never be
broken, and which probably few men living will have an inveteracy of preju-
dice sufficient to gainsay.

The historical books of the New Testament do also admirably illustrate that
argument in favour of christianity, which is drawn from the accomplishment of
prophecies; and this, in a variety of respects. Many very important passages of
of this kind are expressly quoted; not merely by way of allusion, but by a literal and exact application of them, according to their genuine sense, and agreeably to the connection in which they stand. The application of some others, in themselves more dubious, will upon strict examination appear just, and may prove a key to the sense of many more, on the truest principles of analogy; as many writers have shewn, and perhaps no one, since Eusebius wrote his "Demonstratio Evangelica," more judiciously than Mr. Jeaffreson in his controversy with Mr. Collins. Nay, the texts quoted by way of allusion and accommodation, of which there are such numerous instances, have consequently tended to the establishment of the argument from prophecies, however under injudicious management they may seem to have perplexed it; as they have had their share in recommending the Jewish scriptures to the perusal of Christians, and so in guarding them more surely against any possibleness of corruption, if the Jews themselves could have been wicked enough to attempt it.

But, besides these various views in which the citations may be considered under this head, I must farther observe, that when not this or that particular passage of the evangelical history alone, but the whole series of it comes to be compared with correspondent representations in the Old Testament it fixes upon the mind the strongest impression that can well be imagined, of the reference of the prophets to Jesus as the Messiah. The ingenious Earl of Rochester, whose story is so celebrated, was deeply sensible of this with regard to the hint of Isaiah, as illustrated by all the story of our Lord's passion; and there are many other sections of that prophet, and of several others, to which the remark may be applied; which indeed extends to all the general representations of the Messiah's character, conduct, and circumstances.

The account which the New Testament gives us of the temper and character of our divine Redeemer, is a topic of argument on this head by no means to be forgotten. We do not indeed meet with any studied encomiums upon the subject. The authors deal not in such sort of productions; but, which is a thousand times better, they shew us the character itself. The sight of what is great and beautiful has another kind of effect, than the most eloquent description of it. And here we behold the actions of Christ; we attend his discourses, and have a plain and open view of his behaviour. In consequence of this, we see in him every thing venerable, every thing amiable. We see a perfection of goodness no where else in the world to be seen or to be heard; and numberless arguments plead at once, to persuade the heart, that it is absolutely impossible such a person should be engaged in a design founded in known falsehood, and tending only to mislead and ruin his followers.

And though, it is true, the character of his apostles does not fully come up to the standard of their master, nor is entirely free from some small blemishes; yet we see so little of that kind in them, and on the contrary such an assemblage of the human, divine, and social virtues, that we cannot, if we thoroughly know them, if we form an intimate acquaintance with them, entertain with patience the least suspicion that they were capable of a part so detestable as theirs must have been, if they knew Jesus to have been an impostor, and the gospel a fable; with which they must be chargeable, if Christianity were not indeed authentic and divine.

The series of sufferings which they endured, the gentle, humble patience with which they bore them, the steady perseverance and invincible fortitude with which they pursued their scheme, in the midst of them all, and with no earthly prospect but that of a continual hardship and persecution, till it should end in death, furnish out an important branch of this argument, which the book of Acts, especially taken in connection with the Epistles, does almost continually illustrate, in the most artless, and therefore the most forcible manner.

To conclude this head, the history before us represents, in the most clear and
and convincing light, the genius of that doctrine which Christ taught, and of the religion which he came to settle in the world. When we view it as exhibited in human writings, we may mistake; for it is too often tinctured with the channel through which it has passed. Men of bad dispositions have warped it, to make it comply with the corruption of their own hearts, and to subsist, in many instances, the schemes of their ambitious and worldly interests. Good men insensibly influenced by a variety of prejudices, which under fair and plausible forms have insinuated themselves into their breasts, have frequently mistaken, not the essentials of Christianity, (for no good man can mistake them,) but the circumstantial of it; and have propagated their various, and frequently contradictory mistakes, with a zeal which nothing but an apprehension that they were its fundamentals could have inspired: and thus its original purity and beauty have been debased and obscured: But here we drink this water of life at its fountain-head, untainted and unmixed, and with that peculiar spirit which at a distance from it is so apt to evaporate. Here we plainly perceive there is nothing in the scheme but what is most worthy of God to reveal, and of his Son to publish to the world: Here we see not as in the heathen writers, some detached sentiment, finely heightened with the beauty of expression and pomp of words, like a scattered fragment, with the partial traces of impaired elegance and magnificence; but the elevation of a complete temple, worthy of the Deity to whom it is consecrated: so harmonious a system of unmingled truth, so complete a plan of universal duty, so amiable a representation of true morality, in all its parts, without redundance, and without defect, that the more capable we are of judging of real excellence, the more we shall be prepossessed in its favour: And if we have a capacity and opportunity of examining together with it, the books which the followers of other religions have esteemed sacred, and the systems of doctrines and manners which their respective founders have published to the world, we shall find how much the gospel is credited by the comparison; we shall indeed find the difference much like that of a coarse picture of sunshine, from the original beams of that celestial luminary. This I have so deeply felt in mine own heart while reading these books, and especially while commenting upon them, that it has been matter of astonishment as well as of grief to me, that there should be any mind capable of resisting evidence so various, so powerful, and so sweet.

But this leads me to the other branch of the argument; in which I shall remind my reader.

Secondly, That these books are admirably adapted to make those good impressions on the heart which may prepare it for eternal life, through the name of the Redeemer, of whose divine mission they contain such incontestible proofs.

Now the most effectual demonstration of this would be, an attentive perusal of these books, not so much with a view to criticise upon them, as to give up the soul to their genuine influences, and to leave the heart to be (if I may so express myself) carried away with the torrent whither it will; and the impulse cannot fail of being in some happy direction, and, amidst all its varieties, will undoubtedly bear us forward towards that perfection of goodness and of happiness which is the great end of all our pursuits.

For surely the breast of every well-disposed reader, under the influences of that blessed Spirit which guided the sacred penmen in these lively and well-chosen narrations, must by every page of them be inflamed with some devout passion; and his progress must often be interrupted with tears of holy delight, or with warm and perhaps rapturous aspirations of soul. Surely this adorable Saviour cannot be heard, cannot be seen, without admiration and love. Surely the heart must often, as it were, go out to meet him, with its cheerful hosannas to him that cometh in the name of the Lord. Often must it rise in affectionate praises
to the God and Father of all, who blessed this earth of ours with such a visitant, who enriched it with such an unspeakable, such an inestimable gift. A thousand times must it congratulate, and almost envy, the happy lot of those, who dwelling on earth, though in the meanest cottages, when it was blessed with the presence of such a teacher, of such a friend, had daily opportunities of conversing with him; and as often may it exult to think, that he is still near by his spiritual presence, carrying on the kind purposes of his appearance in mortal flesh, and waiting, by the dictates of his divine philosophy, to train up the immortal spirits of men for their proper and complete happiness. Under the impression of that thought, how strongly must the soul be disposed to inquire after Christ, to form an acquaintance with him, to commit itself to his discipline and guardianship, to trace his steps and as far as possible to imitate his Spirit. What will appear so desirable, as to secure his friendship, to be honoured with his high approbation, and enriched with the blessings of his patronage and care? Receiving the divine oracles from his lips, what incomparable advantages have we for learning every thing truly great and lovely? What powerful inducements diligently to labour, ardently to pray, liberally to dispense good, calmly to endure injuries, patiently to support the heaviest afflictions, and resolutely to meet the most dreadful death, if called out to encounter it in the way of our duty?

Among many other good affections which the perusal of this history may naturally inspire, and which I have endeavoured often to suggest in the improvements which conclude each section, I cannot forbear mentioning one more; I mean, a generous and cordial love to our fellow Christians of every rank and denomination. I never reflect upon the New Testament in this view, but I find it difficult to conceive, how so much of a contrary temper should ever have prevailed among such multitudes, who have professed religiously to receive it, yea, whose office hath been to interpret and enforce it. To have listed under the banner of Jesus, to have felt his love, to have espoused his interest, to labour to serve him, to aspire after the enjoyment of him, should methinks appear to every one; even on the slightest reflection, a bond of union too strong to be broken by the different apprehensions that one or another of us may entertain, (perhaps too after diligent inquiry,) concerning the exact sense of some of the doctrines he taught, or the circumstantial forms of some of his institutions. An humble sense of our own weakness, and of the many imperfections of our character, which will never be more deeply felt than when we consider ourselves as standing before our divine Master, will dispense us to mutual candour, will guard us against the indecency of contending in his presence, and will, as St. Paul with admirable spirit expresses it, dispense us to receive one another as Christ hath received us. Yea our hearts will be so eagerly desirous of employing our life in serving him to the best purpose we can, that we shall dread the thought of mis-spending, in our mutual animosities, accusations and complaints, the time that was given us for ends so much nobler, and which is capable of being employed to the honour of our common Lord, and for the benefit of the church and the world.

I hope, I have not forgot, in the ensuing work, this lesson which I have on every occasion been so solicitous to inculcate on others. It would have been almost impossible, on some texts which have fallen before me, especially in which, if they were not different from those which generally prevail, my known conduct in continuing among the Protestant Dissenters would be equally foolish and wicked. Yet, in handling these texts, I have not only conscientiously abstained from all reproaches, to which indeed I am on no occasion inclined, and which I should esteem particularly indecent where the religious establishment of my country is in question, and above all where a body
body of men would be affected, many of whom have been, and are, among the ablest advocates and brightest ornaments of our common Christianity: but I have also been careful to adjust my expressions with as much tenderness and respect, as integrity and that reverence which an honest man would owe to the judgment of his own conscience, it was much more singular than mine, would admit. On these principles I have chosen to content myself, with giving what I take to be the true and genuine sense of the scripture in question, rather than point out any society or body of men that seem to have mistaken it.

I have also been obliged, in many of my interpretations, to differ from writers of various countries, and of various denominations in our own, whom I greatly esteem, and from whom on other passages I have received much light; but I have in such cases been careful not to drop any severe word: as indeed I think, where we have reason to believe that a writer sincerely intends to illustrate Scripture, and to inform the world, he has so far at least a title to our candour and respect; though we may imagine him to be much mistaken in his judgment, and may think it our duty to endeavour to point out his mistake, and to guard others against it. I hope, such a conduct will need no apology to the living writers with whom I have taken such a liberty; nor shall I take it amiss to be animadverted upon by any of them, with the same spirit: and, if I may by this means be led to rectify any mistakes into which I may have unwarily fallen, I hope I shall be duly sensible of the obligation: For I esteem an endeavour to set a man right in religious opinions, which we ourselves apprehend to be important, the second office of Christian friendship, as that of attempting to reform his morals is undoubtedly the first.

No offence will, I hope, be taken at the method I have thought myself obliged in honour and conscience to have recourse to, for solving some of the difficulties which have occurred, and which I knew not how to account for candidly any other way, than by supposing, that here and there our received reading hath varied from the original. I believe, it will be allowed by every competent judge, that there is no one manuscript now in the world unexceptionably exact. And it is some satisfaction to me to reflect, that critics of the first character for modesty, piety, and orthodoxy, have not only made use of this expedient, but have abundantly justified it in their writings: among whom I cannot forbear mentioning those two justly celebrated critics, as well as accurate divines, Calvin and Beza; the latter of which has expressed his sentiments on this head in so judicious, correct, and elegant a manner, that I cannot forbear inserting his own words at the bottom of the page, though I have had obvious reasons in this work for taking care not to load the margin with quotations from the learned languages*.

I am

* Beza in his note on Acts vii. 14, when he proposes the conjectural emendation of σαρκή instead of χάρις, addeth, "Necque verò hujus observatio quenquam debet offendere, vel in dubium revocare verbi divini auctoritatem; quum ex Hebræâ veritate, ut diximus, ensendatur, & salva nihilominus, tum doctrina, tum etiam, historica ipsius, fidis, permaneat: & res ipsa clamat, non uno loco, temporis, injuria, persecutionum acerbitate, adversarium veritatis fraudem, hareticorum audacia, pastorum denique insciitia & utcunquid, numerorum notae labefactari, & alia periculosiora in Sacros libros invexit potissime: Quae tamen eruditi & sancti homines, tum ex alicorn locorum collatione, tum ex fidei analogia, partim animadverterunt, & enendarunt: partim etiam posteris observanda, & corrigenda reliquerunt: Sic prospeciente sua ecclesia Dominus, ut quamvis integri non pance libri intercederint, & errota de quibus disi irreperint, tamen salutis doctrinam totam his ipsius libris certissime & verissime comprehensa habeat eclesia, et in hunc usque sequorium sit habita."
I am sensible, how much I am indebted to the public for the kind reception it was pleased to give to the two former volumes. I hope they who favoured them with their patronage and encouragement, and have an opportunity of perusing this, will find by what I now offer them, that the indulgence shewn me, far from making me indolent, hath rather quickened my diligence. If God grant me life and health, I purpose concluding the whole in three volumes more; in which I shall still endeavour, by the divine assistance, uprightly to illustrate what I in my conscience believe to be the true sense of the sacred writers; and shall at the same time labour, to the utmost of that ability which God may give me, to elevate, to animate, and to unite the hearts of my fellow Christians, that I may subserve the grand plan of the gospel, and give the most substantial proof, that I have not studied its doctrines in vain. May I ever reap the first fruits of the attempt in my own soul! And if the slender and precarious thread of my life be cut short, before, in the midst of so many other necessary employments, such a work can be completed, may God graciously accept a purpose with which I trust he has inspired a breast unfeignedly devoted to his service! And may he in that case raise a much abler hand to execute a task, at the prospect of which, though after the preparation of more than twenty years, I feel a secret kind of terror, mingling itself with all the delight with which I am springing forward to undertake it!

Northampton, Dec. 11, 1746.

name (as he thinks) for Zechariah’s, says roundly, "Quomodo Hieremia nomen obrepserit, me nescire fateor, nec anxiè laboro. Certe Hieremia nomen errore positum esse pro Zechariâ, res ipsa ostendit, quia nihil tale apud Hieremiâ legitur, vel etiam quod accedat." And on Acts vii. 16, where the name of Abraham seems to be put for that of Jacob, he says, "In nomine Abraham erratum esse palam est:—Quare hic locus corrigendus est?"
POSTSCRIPT.

SINCE I first published the two former volumes of the Family Expositor, I have taken the Harmony under an attentive review; but though the publication of this volume, which has long since gone through the press to the end of the Chronological Table, has been delayed so many months beyond my expectation, yet during all this time I have not met with any convincing reasons for transposing one section of it. A variety of necessary engagements have prevented my taking the new and elaborate work of the Reverend Mr. Pilkington on this subject under that accurate examination which the learning, ingenuity, and candour apparent in it on the slightest review may well demand. I hope I shall soon have the pleasure of doing it, and shall receive much light and benefit from it. In the mean time, as a specimen of the readiness with which I shall make my acknowledgments on any such occasion, for farther instruction on subjects on which I have publicly delivered my own thoughts, I cannot but mention the great pleasure with which I have traced the illustration which the account of our Lord's resurrection has received from those very weighty and accurate observations which have been made upon it, with so much sagacity, delicacy, and candour, by Gilbert West, Esq.

It is a great satisfaction to me, to find that we agree in several very important circumstances of the story, in which some late very ingenious writers on this subject have differed from us both; as it likewise is to see, that several of those versions and criticisms which I had proposed and pleaded for, have the sanction of Mr. West's concurrence in them. But as this gentleman has advanced several very material things relating to this very important part of the Harmony of the Evangelists, which were wholly unthought of by me or any other commentators that I have perused, and which also seem to carry along with them a very high degree of probability, in the happiest manner to agree with each other, and greatly to illustrate other scriptures, I shall here give my reader a brief view of Mr. West's scheme, referring to his invaluable work itself for a more particular account of it, as well as for a variety of most solid and important remarks, relating to the evidences of this great fact, and of the truth of Christianity in general, which is so inseparably connected with it.

The scheme proposed there, so far as I can recollect it from an attentive perusal, is this: That during the time of our blessed Redeemer's lying in the grave, several of the pious women who had attended him from Galilee, together with some of their female friends and acquaintance at Jerusalem, agreed to meet at his sepulchre early on the morning of the third day, to embalm the body. Mary Magdalene, the other Mary, Salome, and Joanna, were principal persons in this appointment: The chief care of preparing, that is, pounding, mixing, and melting the spices, was left to Joanna and her company, who were to be there about sun-rising; whereas the two Maries and Salome
(of whom Matthew and Mark chiefly write) came thither at an appointed time early in the morning, or as the day dawned, in order to view the sepulchre, that they might judge whether they and their companions could be able to remove the stone which closed it, or whether it would be necessary to call in other assistance, as they then knew nothing of the guard which was set upon it. While these three women last mentioned, were on their way, Jesus arose, when the angel had opened the sepulchre and struck the guards into amazement and consternation; the consequence of which was, that some of them went to the Jewish rulers, and joined in contriving and propagating the senseless falsehood of the body being stolen, and others went into other parts of the city, and told the matter as it really was. In the mean time when the angel disappeared, and Mary Magdalene approaching the sepulchre, discerned from some distance that the very large stone that stopped it was rolled away, and concluding from thence that the body was removed, left the other Mary and Salome to wait for Joanna and her company, while she herself ran to Peter and John to acquaint them with what she had discovered. While she was gone, these two, (the other Mary and Salome) went toward the sepulchre, and entering into it, saw, to their great astonishment, an angel, who told them that Jesus, whom he knew they sought, was not there, but was risen from the dead, and gave it them in charge to go and acquaint his disciples with it, and to let them know that he would give them a meeting in Galilee. The greatness of their consternation prevented them from saying anything immediately to any one, even to some of their own company, who might pass and repass within their view at least, and so occasioned a delay which left room for some other circumstances. Just as they were on their return, Peter and John came, (perhaps passing by them at some distance,) and Mary Magdalene followed them. John at his first arrival only looked into the sepulchre; but when Peter came and entered it, John went in too, and from the circumstances in which he saw things, believed that Jesus was risen; though the angel, (who could appear or disappear at pleasure) did not render himself visible to either. They returned to the city, and Mary Magdalene, who was now alone, stooping down to look into the sepulchre, saw two angels; but (perhaps imagining they were young men, whom curiosity or accident might have brought thither) took little notice of them, and continued weeping in deep thought and distress, till Jesus appeared, and made himself known to her in those very remarkable words, John xxi. 17. which Mr. West illustrates with some very peculiar observations. Leaving her very suddenly, our Lord appeared to the other Mary and Salome, whom he permitted to embrace his feet, comforted them under their fear, and renewed the

* Our author observes, that this text, I am not yet ascended, &c. comprehends in a few words a variety of most important hints, which have not commonly been taken notice of in them; particularly that our Lord intended by them to recall to the minds of his disciples the discourse he had with them three nights before, in which he explained what he meant by going to the Father; (see John xvi, 28.) and by twice using the word ascend, designed to intimate, that he was to go up to heaven, not merely in spirit, as the pious dead do, but by a corporeal motion and translation, and that it would be some time before he took his final leave of earth by this intended ascension: All which weighty expressions and predictions concur with a thousand other circumstances to shew, how impossible it was that such an apprehended appearance should have been merely the result of a disordered imagination; a consideration, which Mr. West illustrates at large, as he also does the mistaken apprehension of the disciples, who, when some of their companions, whose veracity they could not suspect, testified they had seen the Lord, thought his body was not risen, but that it was only his spirit had appeared to them; which hint I mention as a key, by means of which many passages in the Evangelists are explained in this work.
assurance the angel had given them, that he would meet his disciples in Galilee. While these things were passing at some distance, and the scene at the sepulchre was clear, Joanna and the women who brought the spices, (and of whom Luke only writes,) came, and entering into the sepulchre, at first saw no one in it, till the two angels, who a few minutes before had appeared to Mary Magdalene, made themselves visible to Joanna and her attendants, and assuring them of the resurrection of Jesus, reminded them how it had been foretold by himself, with the previous circumstances of his sufferings, but gave them no charge concerning the information to be carried to the apostles; that having been committed to the others. Yet (as it was natural to suppose they would) some of this second company ran to the city, and, by whatever accident it happened, reached the eleven, and some other disciples who were with them, before the two Maries and Salome arrived, telling them, (which was all they could tell them) that they had seen a vision of angels, who asserted that Jesus was alive. Peter on this ran a second time to the sepulchre, (Luke xxiv. 12,) and not entering as before, but only stooping down and looking into it, he saw no angels, or any thing else but the sepulchre open, but only the linen clothes lying there, on which he returned; and just on his making that report, the two disciples who went that day to Emmaus, or some from whom they received their information, (Luke xxiv. 22—24,) left the place before the arrival of the two Maries and Salome; who, retarded, as was hinted above, by some unknown accident, (perhaps by guessing wrong as to the place where they might find the largest company together,) at last, however, reached them, and made abundant satisfaction for the little delay, (for all might perhaps have passed in an hour,) by assuring them, not only that they also had seen an angel who informed them of their Lord's resurrection, but that Jesus himself had appeared to them, and had even permitted himself to be touched by two of them.

This is Mr. West's scheme of this important story; and the reader will easily perceive, that it chiefly differs from mine in these two circumstances;—That it supposes the women to have made two different visits to the sepulchre, and in consequence of that, two distinct reports; whereas mine unites them, (though I do not suppose they all came together, but that they met there): And that it also makes Peter to have run to it twice, of which I now think there can be no reasonable doubt, though I before incorporated Luke's account with that of John, relating to his running thither with John on Mary Magdalene's first report.

On the whole, whatever embarrassments some may apprehend, I am fully convinced, that the scheme I have offered in my Harmony, will fully acquit the Evangelists from any charge of absurdity or contradiction; and I think it far preferable to any other method of adjusting them which I ever met with, before or since the publication, till this piece of Mr. West came into my hands: But his plan, though not altogether clear of some difficulties, (especially from the connection of the 1st and 10th verses of the xxivth of Luke with the intermediate,) yet seems on the whole to have so many advantages, that I am inclined to acquiesce in it. I doubt not but those of my readers, who have not read the ingenious piece from which this extract is taken, will be glad to find it here, and will take the first opportunity of perusing the book itself, in which they will find a variety of other excellent remarks. I cannot conclude without recommending to the divine blessing, and declaring my joy, that so able and worthy a defender of Christianity is risen up, in a rank of life which leaves no room for insinuating any suspicion of those secular views to which some, who may perhaps judge of others by what they know of their own low principles of action, may be ready ungenerously,
nerously, and in many instances ridiculously, to impute those efforts, which the ministers of the gospel are so frequently making for its vindication.

Since all the preceding part of this Postscript was written, the world has been blessed with another admirable production of this kind, from the pen of one of the politest of writers and worthiest of men, who is lately become the public advocate of that religion, to which he hath much longer been a distinguished ornament. Many of my readers will undoubtedly know, that I refer to the Observations on the conversion and apostleship of St. Paul, by the honourable George Lyttleton, Esq. one of the Lords of the Treasury; a piece if I may presume to give my opinion of it, as perfect in its kind as any our age has produced. I cannot but greatly regret, that I have not the opportunity of enriching my notes on the Acts with several of this gentleman’s judicious and entertaining remarks, which I shall not fail to attempt, if a second edition should be required. In the mean time, I mention it here, that no one who has it in his power may lose the pleasure and benefit of perusing that masterly treatise; in which he will find a most compendious yet unanswerable demonstration of Christianity, proposed in so clear, elegant, and nervous a manner, with such intermingled traces of the author’s excellent heart, that he must surely be among the most perfect, or the most unteachable of mankind, who is not greatly instructed and edified by it.

Oct. 28, 1747.
The Christian converts, being dispersed by persecution, go into other parts and preach the word. Philip the deacon goes to Samaria, where many embrace the gospel, as Simon the sorcerer also professes to do, and on that profession is baptized. Acts VIII. 1–13.

Acts VIII. 1. And in that very day in which this inhuman murder was committed on Stephen, who led the van in the glorious army of martyrs, there was a great persecution excited against the church of Jerusalem, which continued to rage for some time; and such was the severity with which they were pursued by their malicious enemies, that all the principal members of the church were dispersed through the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles.

2 And devout men carried away the stone of death to the procession, as they shewed it to the world, both as an expression of their zealous and pious zeal, and as a mark of respect to one who had been publicly executed as a blasphemer, was an expression of zeal and piety which might justly entitle them to this honourable character. Thus Luke calls Joseph of Arimathea a benevolent and upright man, when he speaks of the generous and courageous regard he shewed to the body of Jesus; (Luke xxiii. 50.) It is possible, the manner in which these devout men celebrated the funeral of Stephen, might be urged by the enemies of Christianity, as an excuse for further severities.

c Like
themselves openly as the friends of that holy and excellent man, whose blood had been so unrighteously shed; and accordingly gathering round the corpse while it lay exposed to public infamy and abuse, they carried Stephen forth [to his burial] with solemn funeral procession, and made great lamentation for him, mourning that the church had lost so excellent an instrument of usefulness, though he himself was so much a gainer by it, as to be the object of congratulation rather than condolence.

3 But Saul, whom we mentioned before, like some furious beast of prey, made havoc of the church without mercy; not only breaking in upon public assemblies, but entering into houses and dragging from them, without any respect either to age or sex, men and women (who) he committed to prison, for no pretended crime but that of having embraced the gospel.

4 Nevertheless God over-ruled all this cruelty and rage, to subserve his own wise and gracious purposes: for they who were dispersed went about into several parts, preaching the word wherever they came; and in many places they were remarkably successful, to which the consideration of their being persecuted for conscience sake might in some measure help to contribute.

5 And we have particularly one instance of it in Philip the deacon; who, after the death of his beloved brother and associate Stephen, came to

c Like some furious beast of prey, made havoc of the church.] Wolius observes, (Cur. Philoh, in loc.) that this is the most proper signification of σπανίον, which is often applied to the savages of the desert.

d Preaching the word.] There is no room to inquire, where these poor refugees had their orders. They were endowed with miraculous gifts and if they had not been so, the extraordinary call they had to spread the knowledge of Christ wherever they came, among those who were ignorant of him, would abundantly justify them in what they did.

e Philip the deacon.] We are sure, it was not Philip the apostle, both as he continued at Jerusalem, and as this Philip had not the power of communicating the miraculous gift of the Holy Spirit by laying on of hands. (Compare ver. 14, 15, 17.) It must therefore be the deacon, no other of that name beside the apostle having been mentioned in this history. Some thing that, for his fidelity and diligence in his inferior office, he was raised to the work of an evangelist. (Compare chap. xvi. 8, and 1 Tim iii. 12.) But to infer from hence, that they, who are ordained to the office of deacons, have by virtue of that a right to preach publicly is not only ungrounded, but seems contrary to the reason assigned by Peter for choosing deacons, chap. vi. 2—4. Besides, Apollos preached before he was baptized; therefore much less can we imagine, he was ordained. (See Acts viii. 24, 25.) And Grotius justly observes, that in circumstances like these any private person might do it. (Compare chap. xi. 20, and see Oecon on Ordination, p. 65.) As for Dr. Hammond's criticism on the words σπανίον and ἐκτέλεσα, as if the former signified public preaching, and the latter, teaching in a way of private converse, it is sufficiently confuted by comparing ver. 5 and 40, chap. xi. 20. xiii. 24. xiv. 15, and many other passages.

carried Stephen to his burial, and made great lamentation over him.
Samaria, and preached Christ unto them.

6 And the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did.

7 For unclean spirits, crying with a loud voice, came out of many that were possessed with them, and many taken with palsy, and that were lame, were healed.

8 And there was great joy in that city.

9 But there was a certain man called Simon, which before time in the same city used sorcery, and bewitched the city of Samaria; and knowing that all distinction between the people of that country and the Jews was now removed; freely preached Christ unto them, and proclaimed him as the promised Messiah. And the people who inhabited that city, notwithstanding their natural prejudices against the Jews, unanimously attended to the things that were spoken by Philip; as they not only heard the rational, convincing, and pathetic words which he spake, but were eye-witnesses of what he wrought in confirmation of his doctrine, and saw the astonishing miracles which he performed. For unclean spirits which had possessed many, crying with a loud voice, came out of them at Philip's command; and many others who were paralytic and lame, and laboured under the most obstinate disorders, were immediately healed. And there was great joy in that city, on account of those benevolent miracles which were performed by Philip in it, and of that excellent doctrine which he preached among them, containing such welcome tidings of pardon and eternal salvation.

But at the time in which the gospel was thus brought by Philip to them, a certain man named Simon was before in that city, who had made himself very remarkable by using the unlawful arts of magic, by means of which he had performed

(Came to the city of Samaria.) For the origin of the Samaritans, and the differences between them and the Jews, see notes on John iv. 9, Vol. I. p. 162. It is certain, they were better prepared to receive the gospel, than most of the Gentile nations, as they worshipped the true God, and acknowledged the authority of the Pentateuch; and as we do not find, that they had either such notions of the Messiah's temporal reign as the Jews, or had received the Sardcean principles, which were both very strong prejudices against the christian scheme. (See Dr. Burnett's History, Vol. I. p. 155.) It is not improbable, that the city here spoken of was Sechem, where Christ himself had preached in the beginning of his ministry; (John iv. 5, 40. & seq.) which was for many years the capital of that country. See Joseph. Antiq. lib xi. cap. 8, § 6.

Using the unlawful arts of magic.] Dr Benson thinks physic to be entirely of the same signification with magi, and intended to tell us, that this Simon was one of the sect of the Magi, for whose principles and history, see Dr. Prideaux, Connect. Vol. I. p. 174, & seq. It is indeed possible, he might profess himself of that sect; but I think the word magian imports much more, and amounts to the same with one who used enchantments, pretending, in consequence of them, to exert some supernatural powers; whereas the word Magus (at least about Christ's time) seems to have signified much the same with our English word Sage, and to denote a professor in learning, and especially in astronomy, and other branches of natural philosophy, to which the Persian Magi addicted themselves, and so gave name to many who were far from holding the peculiarities of that sect. (Compare notes on Matt. ii. 1. Vol. I. p. 77. Yet, as many natural philosophers pretended also to be magicians in the common sense of the word among us; and might make their natural knowledge subservient to that pretence, when it was more imposture, it is not improbable, that they generally called theirselves Magi; and so the word, magian might come to signify the mong
formed such things as were exceeding marvelous and astonishing to the whole nation of Samaria, pretending himself to be some extraordinary person, possessed of supernatural powers:

10. To whom they all paid great regard, from the least to the greatest, saying, This man is surely the great power of God, the long-expected Messiah, and (if we may so speak) omnipotence itself incarnate, or he could never do such wonderful things. And they paid this regard to him, not on seeing one or two extraordinary facts, but because he had for a long time astonished them with the lying wonders that he wrought by [his] enchantments.

12. But when they gave credit to Philip, preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the important truths connected with the name of Jesus Christ, they embraced the gospel in great numbers, and were baptized both men and women.

13. And Simon himself also believed the truth of that doctrine which this divine messenger taught, though his heart was not savingly transformed by its power; and being baptized on a profession of that faith, he always kept near to Philip, beholding with amazement the great and powerful miracles which were wrought by him, with which he was himself as much transported as the Samaritans had formerly been at the sight of his magical performances.

is far from expressing the emphasis of the phrase.

Simon himself also believed.] Perhaps, as Mr. L'Enfant and Limborch conjecture, he might think Philip an abler magician than himself, and hope, by pretending to be his disciple, he might have an opportunity of learning his superior arts.

Beholding with amazement, &c.] It seems with particular elegance and propriety, that the same word, which had been used to express the manner in which the Samaritans were affected with Simon's enchantments, ver. 9, 11., is here used to describe the impression which Philip's miracles made on him, it being there expressed by ἐνθύμησις and ἐνθυμομένῳ, and here by ἐνθυμήσεως. It seems therefore quite wrong to translate the former infatuated, and the latter transported, as the author of the above-mentioned version has done.
IMPROVEMENT.

It was honourably and well done of these devout men, to pay this last token of respect to the remains of this first martyr in the Christian cause, by carrying him to his funeral with solemn pomp and public lamentations; though he died like an infamous criminal. Our ever-living and victorious Lord, no doubt, took it well at their hands; and they will be recompensed at the resurrection of the just, when that mangled body which they deposited in the grave shall be transformed into the glorious image of him for whom he gave it up to destruction, and to whose immediate and faithful care he committed the far nobler and more important part.

The wrath of man, O Lord, shall praise thee, (Psal. lxxvi. 10.) It was particularly made to praise thee in this instance, by sending out the gospel missionaries, who, during the short repose of the church, had been qualifying for their work, and dispersing them through all the neighbouring countries: Had the calm continued longer, while they were so happy in the love and fellowship of each other, they might have been too much inclined to build their tabernacles at Jerusalem, and to say, It is good for us to be here (Mat. xvii. 4;) such delightful mutual converse might have engaged them to prolong their abode there to future months, and perhaps years: In mercy to the churches therefore, and even to themselves, whose truest happiness was connected with their usefulness, were they, like so many clouds big with the rain of heaven, driven different ways by the wind of persecution, that so they might empty themselves in fruitful showers on the several tracts of land through which they went preaching the gospel.

But the remainder of the wrath of this cruel Saul, and the rest of the persecutors, was so restrained in the midst of its career, that the apostles, who of all others seemed the most obnoxious persons, were for the present secure in Jerusalem; the power of Christ wrought secretly for their defence, and by some unknown operation, either softened or awed the minds of those who (humanly speaking) had it in their power to add their blood to that of Stephen. Thus was our Lord’s prediction fulfilled with regard to them, in some of the most pressing dangers that could be imagined, that not a hair of their head should perish, (Luke xxi. 18;) and thus was their fidelity and courage approved, by their continued residence even in this hazardous situation, till Providence gave a farther signal for their removal: In this, and in that, they were no doubt directed by supernatural influence, and we may admire their dutiful obedience to those commands, the particular reasons of which we cannot now fully trace.
The apostles send Peter and John to Samaria.

The continued outrages and cruelties of Saul serve more and more to illustrate the sovereignty and freedom of divine grace, and in that conversion which we are hereafter to survey; and give us a view of a very delightful contrast between the warmth of those efforts which he made first to destroy, and then with proportionable zeal to save.

5. It is also pleasant to observe, how the gospel mutually conquered and the prejudices between the Jews and the Samaritans, teaching the Jews to communicate, and the Samaritans to receive it with pleasure. It was a wonderful providence which had permitted the enchantments of Simon to be so successful before; but at length Simon also believed and was baptized: We see in this, as in a thousand nearer instances, that there may be speculative faith in the gospel, where there is no true piety; and if such persons on the profession of that faith, where nothing appears contrary to it, be admitted to those ordinances by which Christians are distinguished from the rest of mankind, it is an evil in the present state of things unavoidable; and the conduct of Christian ministers and societies in admitting such, will be less displeasing to God than a rigorous severity. May God give us wisdom to guide our way, that we may obtain the happy medium between prostituting divine ordinances by a foolish credulity, and defrauding the children of the household of their bread, because they have not reached such a stature, or do not seek it in those forms or gestures which our mistaken caution may sometimes be ready to demand.

SECT. XVII.

Peter going down to Samaria, to impart spiritual gifts to the converts there, discovers and censures the hypocrisy of Simon. Acts VIII. 14—25.

Acts VIII. 14. Now when the apostles, who, as we observed before, were still at Jerusalem, heard that Samaria had received the word of God, by the preaching of Philip the Evangelist, as was related above, they were desirous that these new converts might be farther settled in their Christian profession, by those spiritual gifts which no inferior teacher or officer in the church could bestow; and accordingly sent to them two of the most considerable of their own number, namely, Peter and John, who had been so remarkable for the miracle they had performed, and the courageous manner in which they had borne
The Holy Spirit is given by the imposition of their hands.

15 Who when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost.

16 (For as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.)

17 Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost.

18 And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles’ hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money,

19 Saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands

borne their testimony to the gospel: Who, though once strongly prejudiced against the Samaritans, now cheerfully undertook the province; and going down thither prayed for them that they might receive the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Spirit, and so be openly put on a level with the believing Jews, and be shewn to be equally owned by God as his people. For though the supernatural influences of the Spirit were displayed among them in the surprising miracles which Philip had performed, these extraordinary powers were not communicated to them, and he was not yet fallen on any of them, only they were baptized, as was said before, in the name of the Lord Jesus. But after the apostles had been praying for them, God was then pleased, in a visible and extraordinary manner, to answer their request; for they had no sooner laid [their] hands on these Samaritan converts, and recommended them to the divine favour, but it was followed with a wonderful effect, and they immediately received the Holy Spirit, and spake with tongues, and performed other extraordinary works.

Now when Simon the magician, of whom we spake before, saw with astonishment that the Holy Spirit in his extraordinary operations was thus apparently given by the imposition of the apostles’ hands, as he imagined with himself, that if he could perform the like, it might turn considerably to his own honour and advantage, especially if by this means he could form persons to the knowledge of languages which they had never been at the trouble of learning in a natural way, he went to the apostles, and offered them a considerable sum of money: Saying, Let me prevail with you by this reward to give me also this power, which I have seen you exercise

a Though once strongly prejudiced against the Samaritans.] John was one of those who, provoked at their inhospitable treatment of Christ, (perhaps in proportion to the degree in which he honoured and loved his divine Master,) had asked a permission to bring down fire from heaven to consume them: (Luke ix. 54;) But he now understood the genius of the gospel much better.—It is observed by Dr. Whitby and others, that, as Peter was sent with John on this errand by the other apostles they had no notion of his being their head or superior.

b That they might receive the Holy Spirit.] We shall not enter into any controversy, as to the foundation this has been supposed to lay for the rite of confirmation, as now practised in some Christian and Protestant churches. It may be sufficient to observe, that here were extraordinary gifts evidently conferred by extraordinary officers; and how suitably this was done in the present case is hinted in the paraphrase, and more largely shewn by Dr. Benson: (Hist. Vol. I. p. 157, 158.)

c Let.
Simon being told of his danger, begs the apostles to pray for him.

But when Peter heard so infamous an offer, he was not able to conceal his indignation, and therefore said to him, in his own name and that of John, Let thy money go with thee to destruction, to which thou art thyself hastening, since thou hast thought so vilely of the free and inestimable gift of the blessed God, as to imagine it might be purchased with money. It is very evident, from such a detestable proposal, that notwithstanding the profession thou hast made, thou art indeed an utter stranger to the efficacy of the gospel, and hast no part nor lot in this matter, nor any interest in the important spiritual blessings to which all these extraordinary gifts are subservient; for thine heart is not upright in the sight of God, otherwise thou wouldst think far more honourably of this Spirit of his, than to form a mercenary scheme to traffic in it in this scandalous manner. Repent therefore immediately of this thy enormous wickedness, and beg of God with the deepest humiliation and the most fervent prayer, if perhaps his infinite mercy may yet be extended to such a wretch, and the blasphemous thought of thy corrupt heart may be forgiven thee: For though thou wast so lately washed with the water of baptism, hands he may receive the Holy Ghost.

But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money.

Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter; for thy heart is not right in the sight of God.

Rejoice therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee.

For I perceive that thou art in the gate.

Let thy money go with thee to destruction.] This is not an imprecation, but a strong way of admonishing Simon of his danger, and of expressing how much rather the apostle would see the greatest sum of money lost and cast away, than receive any part of it on such shameful terms.

Thine heart is not upright in the sight of God.] This is no instance of Peter's inaccurately discerning spirits, for every common minister or Christian might have made the inference in such circumstances. But on the other side, this story will by some means prove Peter to have been destitute of this gift. He might (like Christ in the case of Judas,) have discerned Simon's hypocrisy long before he thought fit to discover it openly, or he might have the gift really in some instances, though not in this; for there is no more reason to suppose, that Christ ever gave any of his servants an universal power of discerning the hearts and characters of all they conversed with, than there is to believe, he gave any of them a power of healing all the sick they came near, which we are sure that Paul (though he was not inferior to the chief of the apostles, &c. Cor. xvi. 3; xlii. 11;) had not; otherwise he would not have suffered the illness of Epaphroditus to have brought him so near to death, (Phil. ii. 25-27,) nor have left so useful a fellow-labourer as Tychicus sick at Mileum; (2 Tim. iv. 20.)

Rejoice therefore, &c.] Here is so incontestable an evidence of an unconverted sinner being exalted to repentance and prayer, while he was known to be in that state, that it is astonishing it should ever have been disputed; and one would think, none could be so wild as to imagine, faith in Christ was not included in that repentance and prayer, which an apostle praysch to a baptized person as the way of obtaining forgiveness. The dubious manner in which he speaks of his being forgiven, intimates, not that his sincere repentance might possibly fail of acceptance, for that is contrary to the whole tenor of the gospel, but that after the commission of a sin, so nearly approaching blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, there was little reason to hope he would ever be brought truly to repent.
Then answered Simon, and said, Pray ye to the Lord for me, that none of these things which ye have spoken come upon me.

And they, when they had testified and preached the word of the Lord, returned to Jerusalem, and preached the gospel in many villages of the Samaritans.

24 Then answered Simon, and said, Pray ye to the Lord for me, that none of these things which ye have spoken come upon me, for I am far from disbelieving the truth of the gospel, how improper soever my proposal might be, or however derogatory from the honour of it. Thus did the two apostles, Peter and John, perform the errand they were sent upon, and executed their commission; when therefore they had borne their testimony to the truth of the gospel, and had spoken the word of the Lord Jesus Christ to many, who had not received it from the mouth of Philip, they returned to the other ten at Jerusalem; and as they went along, they preached the gospel in many other towns and villages of the Samaritans, which lay in their way.

IMPROVE-

1 In the gall of bitterness, &c.] The gall of bitterness is the bitterest gall; and the whole sentence expresses, in Peter’s strong manner of speaking, how odious and revolting a creature Simon now appeared to him. How much more odious in the eyes of an holy God must such a sinner be! (Compare Deut. xxix. 18; xxxii. 32; and Isa. liii. 6.) Albertus (Observ. p. 236,) and De Dieu, would render it, “I see thee as the very gall of bitterness, and a bundle of iniquity.” (Compare Mat. xix. 5; 2 Cor. vi. 18; Heb. vii. 10;) in which places the former thinks it is used in the same sense as here. See Beza’s beautiful illustration of this text.

2 Make your supplications to the Lord on my account.] It is much to be feared, this pretence of contrition and humiliation was only to prevent Peter and John from disgracing him among the body of Christians; for it is reasonable to suppose, this conversation passed in private between them; and perhaps Simon might have some hope, that, if the secret were kept, he might reduce the people when Peter was gone, to their former subjection to him, notwithstanding their conversion to Christianity.

h These things which ye have spoken.] As the plural number is here used, (if it be not, as I think it sometimes is, put for the dual,) since one cannot imagine, as I hinted above, that the proposal was publicly made, it seems most natural to refer this to the awful things he had heard in this course of Christian preaching, concerning the terrible effects of the divine displeasure against implacable sinners in future.


2 Histories
IMPROVEMENT.

Let us observe this peculiar honour by which the apostles were distinguished, that the holy Spirit was given by the imposition of their hands. Thus did Christ bear his testimony to them, as the authorized teachers of his church; and it evidently appears, that we may with great safety and pleasure submit ourselves to their instruction; for these extraordinary gifts were intended in some measure for our benefit; that by an entire resignation to their authority, thus attested, we might be made partakers of those graces, in comparison of which the tongues of men and of angels would be but as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. (1 Cor. xiii. 1.)

18, 19 Who can read without horror the infamous proposal which Simon made, when he thought of purchasing the gift of God with money? With somewhat of the same horror must we look on all those by whom sacred things are either bought or sold; it is an infamous traffick, about which an upright man cannot deliberate a moment, but will reject it at once with an honest scorn and indignation, like that of Peter in the present instance. God grant that none of the ordinances of Christ may ever be prostituted to secular ends, which seems a crime almost equally enormous! In vain it is for men to profess themselves Christians, in vain to submit like Simon to baptism, or like him to adhere constantly to the ministers of the gospel, if their heart be not right with God; an hypocritical conduct like this will proclaim it aloud, that they are in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity. Wash us, O God, from this odious and polluting gall, which naturally overspreads us; and loosen these bonds of sin with which Satan may sometimes bind those who have a name and a place in thy church, and in which he conveys them to final and everlasting destruction.

22 Yet let us not utterly despair even of the worst of men, but direct them to that great universal remedy, a deep and serious repentance of their sins, and an earnest address to God by prayer; to him who can wash us from crimson stains, and break in pieces fetters of iron. It is some token for good, when sinners seem to fall under reproof, and desire the prayers of those who are more upright than themselves: But if men are animated in such requests and submissions, by no more noble and generous a principle than a fear of destruction from God, there is great reason to suspect the sincerity of that repentance which they profess, and to apprehend that, like Simon, they will unsay all their confession, and perhaps like him (if we may credit the most authentic uninspired histories of the church)
church) become open enemies to that gospel which they pretended for a while to believe and reverence.

SECT. XVIII.

Philip, by divine direction, instructs an Ethiopian Eunuch in the faith of Christ; and, having baptized him, goes and preaches the gospel in the neighbouring coasts of the Mediterranean sea. Acts VIII. 26, to the end.


WHEN these important affairs at Samaria were dispatched, and the church there was in so flourishing and happy a state, an angel of the Lord spake to Philip the evangelist, who had been so successful in his labours amongst them, saying, Arise and go towards the south, by the way that goeth down from Jerusalem to Gaza, which is through the desert or wilderness of Judea; for there in that retired solitude thou shalt meet with a person whom I will mark out to thee, with whom thou art to have a conversation of great moment.

And without presuming more particularly to inquire into the design of the errand on which he was sent, he arose and took his journey as the angel had directed him: And behold, a certain Ethiopian eunuch, a grandee in the court of Candace

4 Histories of the church.] See Enseb. Eclest. Hist. lib. ii. cap. 14; Theodoret Hist. Fab. lib. i. cap. 1; and compare note § 16, p. 18.

5 An angel of the Lord spake to Philip.] It gives us a very high idea of the gospel, to see the ministers of it receiving such immediate direction from celestial spirits, in the particular discharge of their office.

6 Which is desert.] The construction of the Greek leaves it doubtful, whether this clause refers to Gaza, or to the way that led to it. Dr. Benson, with Grotius, Drusius, and other considerable writers, conclude that Gaza, (a city of the Phoenicians often mentioned in the Old Testament, Judg. xvi. 1, 21; Zeph. ii. 4; Zech. ix. 5, after having been conquered by Pharaoh king of Egypt, (Ger. xviii. 1,) was ruined by Alexander the Great, and afterwards rebuilt with great magnificence, (Arrian, de Exped. Alex. lib. iv. cap. 2; Strabo, Geograph. lib. xvi. p. 522; Joseph. Antiq. lib. xi. cap. 8, § 5, & lib. xiii. cap. 13, [al. 21.] § 3,) the new city was built at some distance from the old, which was left in ruins, and therefore called Gaza the desert. But as this last fact is not sufficiently attested, I rather think, with Beza and Cassaubon, that Philip is here directed to take that road to Gaza, which lay through the wilderness, which (though perhaps it might not be the shortest,) was chosen by the eunuch as the more retired; and I think the Greek idiom favours this interpretation, as it is not επειτα ἐν τῷ ἑλεστὶ, but ἐπειτα ἐν τῷ ἐστάσει.

7 A certain Ethiopian eunuch.] It is certain that the Hebrew word דסי, which answers to ἐνοχισμός, an eunuch, is sometimes very properly rendered an officer; (See Gen. xxviii. 36, xxxix. 1, 2 Kings viii. 6, 1 Chron. xxvii. 1.) And the learned Heinsohn takes pains to establish an etymology of דסי, which should make it an intimation of the good disposition of the person to whom it was given. But in what sense it is used here, is an inquiry of no manner of importance; and I think any curious discussion of such kind of questions would by no means suit a Familiar Expositor.—I only add with Beza, that it seems quite ridiculous to imagine, that εὐνοικυς was intended to
Candace the Queen of the Ethiopians, who was the person that presided over all her treasure, was travelling that way; who, as he was entirely proselyted to the Jewish religion, had lately come to worship at Jerusalem at one of the great feasts:

This man was then returning home; and his mind being deeply impressed with devout and religious sentiments, in consequence of those solemnities which had passed in that sacred place, as he pursued his journey, while he sat in his chariot, he was reading the prophet Isaiah; that he might thus fill up that vacant space of time, which his journey allowed him to some valuable purpose, and so might be better prepared to pass with safety through those busy scenes which would be before him when he arrived at home. And the spirit, by that secret suggestion, which inspired men could certainly distinguish as a divine revelation, said to Philip, Approach, and join thyself to this chariot, and enter into conversation with the person who sitteth in it, without fear of offending him, or exposing thyself to any inconvenience.

And Philip, running up to the chariot, heard him reading the Scriptures; for he read aloud, that his own mind might be more deeply impressed with it, and that his servants who were near him might receive some benefit by it. And Philip, being well acquainted with the holy Scriptures, easily perceived that it was the book of the prophet Isaiah which was then before him, and that the passage would give him a very proper opportunity for entering into discourse with him concerning Christ, and delivering to him that evangelical message with which he was charged: He therefore took occasion to begin the conversation from this circumstance, and said to the eunuch, Dost thou understand the true

In signify anything more than τι; I have therefore rendered it accordingly.

A grandee in the court of Candace, the Queen of the Ethiopians. It appears, that Candace was a name common to several of the queens who reigned in Meroe, a part of Ethiopia, to the south of Egypt: (Compare Plin Nat. Hist. lib. vi. cap. 29; and Alex. Geniv. Dion. lib. i. cap. 2.) So that it is very uncertain, whether this princess be the person mentioned by Dio Cassius and Strabo, as at war with the Romans in the time of Augustus.—I k

we are to regard the authority, on which De Dieu tells us that the name of this eunuch was Judah, and that of the Queen, by which she was distinguished from others, Lacasa.

Sat in his chariot reading. &c. Probably this chariot was something in the form of our chaises with four wheels; for though the eunuch did not guide it himself, there was room for another person to come and sit with him. (Ver. 31.) the charioteer therefore seems to have sat on a seat by himself.

23 Was returning and sitting in his chariot, read Esajas the prophet.

29 Then the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near and join thyself to this chariot.

30 And Philip ran thither to him, and heard him read the prophet Esajas, and said, Understanding thou
And is desired by the Eunuch to explain it to him.

31 And he said, How can I, except some man should guide me? and he desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him.

32 The place of the Scripture which he read, was this; He was brought to the slaughter as a sheep, and as a lamb before its shearer [is] dumb, so he opened not his mouth: in his deep humiliation his judgment was taken away; and who shall declare or describe his generation?

[In his humiliation his judgment was taken away.] The present reading of the Hebrew clause, answering to this, is much more agreeable to our translation of Isa. liii. 8. He was taken from prison and from judgment. But the seventy interpreters, whose version is here literally transcribed in the Greek and exactly rendered in our translation, instead of μετά τῆς ἀποκλίμασεν... ἑαυτοῦ, which seems either to have been the true reading, or in sense equivalent to it: for I cannot think, as Beza and many other commentators do, that it refers to Christ's being taken by his resurrection from his confinement in the grave, and from the judgment, or sentence which had been executed upon him; agreeable to which Mr. D'Enfant renders it, His condemnation was taken away by his very abasement; that is, his stooping to death gave occasion to this triumph; a sense, neither natural in itself, nor favoured by the connection as it stands in Isaiah. It seems rather to mean, if the Greek version be here admitted, 1 John appeared in so humble a form, that, though Pilate was convinced of his innocence he seemed a person of so little importance, that it would not be worth while to hazard any thing to preserve him.” Le Clerc (in his Supplement to Dr. Hammond,) intimates this interpretation, with a small, and (so far as I can judge,) unnecessary and unwarrantable change in the version, for his humiliation he was judged, he was taken away. But our translation is far more literal, and to take away a person's judgment is a known proverb for oppressing him. See Job xxvii. 2.

Who shall declare or describe his generation? This is one of the many passages of the Old Testament Prophecies, in which it is not so difficult to find a sense fairly applicable to Christ, as to know which to prefer of several that are so. Many ancient, as well as modern writers, have referred it to the mystery of his divinity, or of his incarnation; but Calvin and Beza say, this was owing to their ignorance of the Hebrew; the word רֹחַם not admitting such a sense; and it is certain, it very ill suits the connection with the following clause, Dr. Samuel Harris has a long discourse (which seems only a fine-spun cob-web,) to prove, that it refers to his not having any witnesses to appear for him, and give an account of his life and character, as he takes רֹחַם in the former clause to signify his having no advocate to plead his cause. (See his Second Discourse, p 65., & seq. and his Essay, p. 143—146.) Others, with Calvin
Philip preaches Christ to the Eunuch;

sect. xviii.

for innocent as he was, his life is cut off from the earth." A passage expressly referring to the meekness with which the blessed Jesus should endure all his sufferings, while ungrateful sinners, in contempt of all laws human and divine, persecuted him even to the death.

And the eunuch answering to Philip, said, I beseech thee to inform me, of whom doth the prophet say this? of himself, or some other person? Was Isaiah thus inhumanly put to death by the Jews? or did he foretell the sufferings of some future and greater person?

Then Philip, secretly adoring the divine Providence in giving him so fair an opportunity, opened his mouth with an air of solemnity proportionable to the importance of what he had to say, and beginning from this very scripture, in which he was so plainly delineated, preached to him the glad tidings of that Jesus, of whom not Isaiah alone, but so many of the other prophets spoke: And after he had laid before him the predictions recorded in scripture concerning him he bore witness to the glorious accomplishment of them, and gave him the history of those extraordinary facts which had lately happened in confirmation of that gospel he taught.

His noble hearer, in the mean time, listened attentively, and though he saw no miracle performed in evidence of the truth of Philip’s doctrine, he found such a light breaking in upon

vin and Beza, think it is as if the prophet had said, "Who can declare how long he shall live or reign, or count the numerous offspring that shall descend from him?"

But not to say that this idea is much more clearly expressed by the prophet in verse 10, which on this interpretation is a tautology. I cannot find that דִּין and צִיוֹן are used as synonymous terms. The former of those words in the Hebrew signifies the same with generation of men in English, who are contemporaries, (Gen. vii. 1. Jud. ii. 10. Psal. cxxv. 10. cxxix. 13.) and as given in the Septuagint has most frequently this sense, so it evidently has in the writings of Luke. (See Luke xi. 30, 50. xvii. 25. Acts ii. 40. xiii. 36.) And therefore I suppose, with Dr. Hammond, the sense to be, "Who can describe the obdurate infidelity and harrowing injustice of that generation of men, among whom he appeared, and from whom he suffered such things?" But as it did not seem proper to determine this by rendering it, (as in the version in 1726.) Who can describe the

men of his time! because a translator of Scripture should leave ambiguous expressions, as he finds them,) so I thought it would be best to insert the paraphrase on both these clauses in the notes, that I might leave room for the eunuch’s question, in the next verse, which otherwise must have been superseded.

Philip opened his mouth.] See note e on Mat. v. 5, Vol. I. p. 199.

Preached to him Jesus.] Limborch very largely shews, in his commentary on this passage, how shamefully the Jews pervert the whole 53d of Isaiah, in exploding it of the afflictions of Israel; and I am surprised to find, that Dr. Hammond intimates, it might be accomplished in some one who lived quickly after Isaiah’s time.—See all that Mr. Collins has urged on that head (Literal Scheme, chap. v. § 12. p. 208—220.) abundantly confuted by Dr. Bullock, Vind. p. 147—156.—Compare Bishop Chandler on Christianity, p. 174—178.
And when he had professed his faith, baptizes him.

upon his mind from the view of the prophecies, and such an inward conviction wrought in his spirit by the divine influence, that he became a sincere convert to the gospel. And having for some time discoursed together of the person and the sufferings of Christ, and of the method of salvation by him, as they came by the way, they came to a certain water, there being in that place some pool or stream adjoining to the road; and the eunuch, having learnt what was the rite of initiation which the great prophet and sovereign of the church had appointed, was willing to embrace the first opportunity that Providence offered of making a surrender of himself to Christ, and being received into the number of his people; upon which he said unto Philip, Behold [here is] water; what should hinder my being baptized, and becoming from this hour one of your body?

And Philip said unto him, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

And he commanded the chariot to stand still; and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him.

1 I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of GOD.] It is surprising to see, in how many ancient copies and versions this verse is omitted. (See Dr. Mill in loc. and the version of 1787.) Nevertheless, " says Beza, God forbid, I should think it ought to be expunged, since it contains such a confession of faith, as was in the apostolic times required of the adult, in order to their being admitted to baptism." Allowing it to be genuine, it fully proves, that Philip had opened to the eunuch the doctrine of Christ's divinity; and indeed, if he had not done it, he must have given him a very imperfect account of the gospel.

1 They both went down to the water.] Considering how frequently bathing was used in those hot countries, it is not to be wondered, that baptism was generally administered by immersion, though I see no proof, that it was essential to the institution. It would be very unnatural to suppose, that they went down to the water, merely that Philip might take up a little water in his hand to pour on the eunuch. A person of his dignity had, no doubt, many vessels in his baggage, on such a journey through so desert a country, a precaution absolutely necessary for travellers in those parts, and never omitted by
Philip is caught away from the Eunuch.

and Philip, the eunuch, and there he baptized him;

And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord snatched away Philip in a miraculous manner, and the eunuch saw him no more; for as it thus appeared that Providence designed they should be separated, he did not attempt to search for him in the neighbouring parts, or to go any where to follow him, how much soever he esteemed his conversation; but getting up again into his chariot, he went on his way rejoicing; with an heart full of thankfulness, that he had been favoured with the privilege of so important an interview with him, and that having received the gospel from his lips, he had seen such a miraculous confirmation of its truth in the sudden manner in which this divinely-commissioned teacher was removed from his sight, to which all his attendants were witnesses.

But Philip, quickly after he was separated from the eunuch, was found at Azotus, or Ashdod, a city that was more than thirty miles from Gaza in the southern parts of the country, which had been formerly one of the five governments belonging to the Philistines; (1 Sam. vi. 17.) and going on from thence he preached the gospel with great success in Joppa, Lydda, Saron, and all the other cities along the coast of the Mediterranean sea, till he came to Caesarea, where Providence directed him to settle for a considerable time. (See Acts xxi. 8, 9.)

But Philip was found at Azotus: and passing through, he preached in all the cities, till he came to Caesarea.

Snatched away Philip.] Probably he transported him part of the way through the air, a thing which seems to have happened with respect to some of the prophets. (Compare 1 Kings xviii. 12, 2 Kings ii. 16, Ezek. iii. 14.) The spacious plain, which was probably the scene of this miracle, would make it so much the more conspicuous; and it would, no doubt, prove a great confirmation of the eunuch's faith.

To Caesarea.] This was a city on the coast of the Mediterranean Sea, which was anciently called Stratonice, or Straton's Tower, (See Joseph. Antiq. lib. xiii. cap. 11. [41. 19.] § 2. & Bell. Jud. lib i. cap. 3. § 4, 5.) It was far distant from Caesarea Philippi, (of which we read Mat. xvi. 13.) which was situated to the north, in the tribe of Naphthali, and near the sources of Jordan. See note c on Mark viii. 27, Vol. I. p. 481.
IMPROVEMENT.

There is great reason to adore the gracious councils and purposes of God, with respect to this Ethiopian eunuch; he was a chosen vessel, and desiring to improve that weak light which Ver. he had, God took effectual methods to impart to him more. 26, 27

Thus shall we know if we follow on to know the Lord, (Hos. vii. 3.)

An angel of the Lord is sent to give directions to an evangelist to meet him in a desert, and to instruct him there in what he had not learnt in his attendance at Jerusalem: And Philip, in obedience to the divine command, immediately retires from the more public service he had been engaged in at Samaria, to execute whatever God should please to call him to, though he should order him to go into a wilderness, as he could open even there a door of opportunity to make him useful; and while, like Philip, we govern ourselves by the intimations of his will, we shall not run in vain, nor labour in vain. (Phil. ii. 16.)

It was a prudent and exemplary care, especially in a person engaged in such a variety of public business as the eunuch was, to improve that vacant space of time which a journey allowed him, in reading what might edify and instruct him even as he sat in his chariot: He chose the sacred oracles, and, while perusing them, was in an extraordinary manner taught of God. The question which Philip put to him, we should often put to ourselves; Understand thou what thou readest? Let us choose those writings which may be worth our study, and then let us labour to digest them, and not rest in the empty amusement which a few wandering, unconnected, and undigested ideas may give us, while they pass through our minds like so many images over a mirror, leaving no impression at all behind them. The Scripture especially will be worthy of our study, that we may understand it; and we should earnestly pray, that this study may be successful. For this purpose let us be willing to make use of proper guides, though it must be confessed, that none we are like to meet with at present can have a claim to that authority with which Philip taught. It is pleasant, nevertheless, with becoming humility, to offer what assistance we can to our fellow travellers on such an occasion as this: and God grant that we who do it, especially in that way which is most extensive and lasting, may neither be deceived in scripture ourselves, nor deceive others by misrepresenting its sense!

If we enter into the true sense of the ancient prophecies, we must undoubtedly see Christ in them, and particularly in that excellent chapter of Isaiah which the pious eunuch was now reading. Let us often view our divine master in that amiable and
Saul, full of rage against the church, sets out for Damascus.

Sect. xviii.

affecting light in which he is here represented; let us view him, though the Son of God, by a generation which none can fully declare, yet brought to the slaughter as a lamb, and dumb as a sheep before its sheavers: And let us learn patiently to suffer with him, if called to it, in humble hope of reigning with him, (2 Tim. ii. 12.) even though, like his, our judgment also should be taken away, and we be cut off from the land of the living.

36—38 Let those who firmly believe in him as the Son of God, enter themselves into his church, by those distinguishing solemnities which he has appointed for that purpose, to which the greatest should not think themselves above submitting: Let the ministers of Christ readily admit those that make a credible profession of their faith in Jesus, and of their resolution to be subject to him, to such ordinances, not clogging them with any arbitrary impositions or demands. And when men are come to a point thus solemnly to give themselves up to the Lord, and have done it in his appointed method, let them go on their way rejoicing, even though Providence should separate from them those spiritual guides who have been owned as the happy instruments of their conversion and their edification.

40 The servants of Christ are called to glorify him in different scenes and stations of life; happy if in one state and country or another they may spread the savour of his name, and gather in converts to him, whether from among the sons of Israel or of Ethiopia.

SECT. XIX.

Saul, setting out for Damascus, with an intent to persecute the church there, is miraculously converted by our Lord's appearance to him on the way. Acts IX. 1—9.

Acts IX. 1.

We have observed in the preceding history, that the persecution against the disciples of Jesus was very violent and severe after the death of Stephen; and particularly, that the youth, who was called Saul, distinguished himself by his forwardness in it; insomuch that all the principal members of the church were driven away from Jerusalem, except the apostles. (Sect. 16. Acts viii. 1, 3.) But Saul was so exceedingly

After the death of Stephen.) There are many disputes, as to the time of Paul's conversion. The learned Spanheim advances several arguments to prove, that it happened six or seven years after Christ's death, about the fourth year of Caligula, A.D. 50. I rather think with Dr. Benson, (agreeably to Bp. Pearson's Chronology,) that it was a pretty deal sooner, but that the exact time cannot be fixed from any circumstances transmitted to us.

Breathing
threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest,
exceedingly outrageous in his zeal against the gospel, that he could not be satisfied with this; his very heart was set upon extirpating the followers of Jesus, and like some ravenous and savage beast he was still breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord; in every word he spoke he menaced their destruction, and as if all the hardships of exile and imprisonment were too little, with a most cruel eagerness he thirsted for their blood. With this intent he came to the high-priest, whom he knew to be much exasperated against them. And petitioned for letters from him in the name of the whole Sanhedrin, (chap. xxii. 5. xxxvi. 12.) directed to the rulers of the Jewish synagogues at Damascus, whither (as he had been informed) some of those distressed refugees had fled, that if he found any of that way there, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem, to be proceeded against in the severest manner by the Sanhedrin.

And as he was proceeding on his journey, and was now come near Damascus, it being just about the middle of the day, a wonderful event happened, which threw the whole course of his life into a different channel, and was attended with the most important consequences both to him and the church; for on a sudden a great light from heaven shone around him, exceeding the

\[b\] Breathing out threatenings and slaughter.] This is an exceeding emphatical expression, as Eiiger has well shewn in his illustration of it; but it will not prove, that he was able to accomplish the death of many of the Christians, though he might threaten it with almost every breath. It must increase his rage to hear, that those, whom he had been instrumental in driving from Jerusalem, were so successful in spreading the religion he was so eager to root out.

\[c\] Came to the high-priest.] The person now in that office seems to have been Caiaphas the inveterate enemy of Christ, who had so great a hand in his death. He would therefore gladly employ so active and bigotted a zealot as Saul; and it is well known, that the Sanhedrin, however its capital power might be abridged by the Romans, was the supreme Jewish court, and had great influence and authority among their synagogues abroad.

Come near to Damascus.] Witsius has given us a large and entertaining account of this city, in his Life of Paul, cap. ii. § 2. It was the capital city of Syria, (Isa. vii. 8.) and abounded so much with Jews, that Josephus assures us ten thousand of them were massacred there in one hour, and at another time eighteen thousand with their wives and children: Joseph. Bell. Jud. lib. ii. cap. 20. [al. 25.] § 2. & lib. viii. cap. 8. [al. 28.] § 7.

\[d\] A light from heaven shone around him.] This was occasioned by the rays of glory which darted from the body of our Lord. Some have thought, that Saul, being a learned Jew, would easily know this to be the shekinah, or visible token and symbol of the divine presence, and that he therefore cries, Who art thou, Lord? though he saw no human form. (See Lord Barrington's Miscell. Sacra. Essay iii. p. 5.) But I think, the question implies, he did not know who or what he was, and that it is plain from chap. xxii. 14, and other texts, that he did see, amidst this glory, a human form, which yet he might not at first imagine to be that
the lustre of the meridian sun; (chap. xxii. 6. xxvi. 13.) And such was the effect this
wonderful appearance had upon him, that he
fell to the ground, being struck from the beast
on which he rode, as all that travelled with him
likewise were, (chap. xxvi. 14) and to his
great astonishment he heard a loud and distinct
voice saying unto him in the Hebrew language,
Saul, Saul, why dost thou persecute me? And
as he saw at the same time the bright appearance
of some glorious person in a human form, he
was possessed with awe and reverence, and said,
Who art thou, Lord? and what is it that I have
done against thee? And the Lord Jesus, (for it
was he who had condescended to appear to him
on this occasion,) said, I am that Jesus [the
Nazarene,] whom, by the opposition thou art
making to my gospel, and by thy cruelty to my
disciples, thou madly persecutest; (chap. xxii. 8.
bout remember, [it is] hard for thee to kick against
the goads, and all thy fury can only wound
thyself, without being able to do me or my
cause any real injury.

6. And when Saul heard and saw, that he who
had so often been affronted and despised by him,
even that Jesus of Nazareth whom he had so
blasphemously and virulently opposed, was such
a glorious and powerful person, and yet that,
instead of destroying him immediately as he
might with ease have done, he had condescended
thus compassionately to expostulate with him,
his mind was almost overborne with an unutter-

able

4. And he fell to the earth, and heard
a voice, saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why
persecutest thou me?

5. And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And
the Lord said, I am Jesus, whom thou per-
secutest: It is hard for thee to kick against
the pricks.

6. And he trembling and astonished, said,
Lord,
Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do.

Acts XXVI.—16. For I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee;

17 Delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee,

18 To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.

Acts IX. 7. And the men which journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice, but seeing no man.

able mixture of contending passions; so that trembling at the thought of what he had done, and amazed at the glorious appearance of Jesus, he said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? For instead of carrying my mad opposition any farther, I with all humility resign myself entirely to thy disposal, and humbly wait the intimations of thy sacred pleasure, determined to submit to whatsoever thou shalt order me. And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and stand upon thy feet, and go into the city, and I will take care that it shall there be told thee what thou must do, and that thou shalt be instructed in all things which I have appointed concerning thee; (chap. xxii. 10; xxvi. 16.) “For I have thus appeared unto thee for this purpose, to constitute and ordain thee a minister and servant to me, in the great work of propagating my gospel, and to appoint thee a witness both of those things which thou hast now seen, and of those in which I will hereafter manifest myself unto thee: And in the testimony thou shalt give, I will be with thee to protect thee by my power and providence, delivering thee in the midst of a thousand dangers from the malice of the Jewish people, and of the Gentiles; to whom, as the one or the other may come in thy way, I now send thee. That I may make thee instrumental to open their blind eyes, and to turn [them] from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God; that they may thus receive the free and full forgiveness of all their most aggravated sins, and may have an inheritance among them that are sanctified by means of that faith which is in me.”

And the men who travelled with him, upon their rising from the ground, to which they had been struck upon the first appearance of the light from heaven, stood in a fixed posture perfectly astonished, and seemed for a while to be turned (as it were) into statues: And they were so confounded, that they uttered not a word, hearing indeed the sound of that voice which

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Having lost his sight, he is led by the hand to Damascus.

8 And Saul arose from the earth; and when his eyes were opened, he saw no man; but they led him by the hand, and brought him into Damascus.

9 And he was three days without sight, and neither did eat nor drink.

which had spoken to Saul, without distinctly understanding the sense of what was said, (chap. xxii. 9.) but seeing no one, nor perceiving who it was that had been speaking to him.

But Saul, when he had seen this heavenly vision, arose from the earth; and though his eyes were open, he was incapable of discerning objects, and saw no one man of those who stood near him; for his nerves were so affected with the glory of that light which had shone from the body of Jesus, that he had lost the power of sight, (chap. xxii. 11.) But they that were with him led him by the hand, as it would not be safe for him to ride in such a condition, and brought him to Damascus. And he was at his lodging there three days without sight, and during all that time he neither saw nor drank, but lay for a considerable part of it as in a trance, in which he saw some extraordinary visions, particularly of Ananias who was to visit him, (compare ver. 12;) and the remainder of it he employed in such deep humiliation and humble earnest prayer, as suited his past guilt, and his present astonishing circumstances.

IMPROVE—

1 Hearing the voice.] Beza, Vatablus, and Clarus think, they heard Saul's voice. But not that of Christ. Dr. Hammond, that they heard the thunder, not the articulate sound which attended it. Dr. Benson, as omnit often signifies to understand; supposes these attendants were Hellenist Jews, who did not understand the Hebrew, which was the language in which Christ spake. But I think with Dr. Whitty, that the most probable way of reconciling this with chap. xxii. 9; is that which is expressed in the parallel, and that it is confirmed by John xii. 29, when some present at the voice from heaven which came to Christ, took it for thunder. See Mr. Bisor, at Boyle's Lect. p. 665. 666.

2 But seeing no one.] So it was with the men who were with Daniel, when he saw the vision, (Dan. x. 7.) And the Heathens, however they came by the notion, thought their delites often rendered themselves visible to one only, in a company consisting of many. See Elsmen, Observ. Vol. I. p. 403—405.

3 Without sight.] Scales grew over his eyes, not only to intimate to him the blindness of the state he had been in, but to impress him also with a deeper sense of the almighty power, of Christ, and to turn his thoughts inward, while he was rendered less capable of conversing with external objects. This would also be a manifest token to others of what had happened to him in his journey, and ought to have been very convincing and humbling to those pious Jews, to whom, as the most probable associates in the cruel work he intended, the Sanhedrin, had directed those letters, which Saul would no doubt destroy as soon as possible.

m Neither saw nor drink.] Grotius and some later writers think, this was a voluntary fact, in token of his deep humiliation for the guilt he had contracted by opposing the gospel; but it might very possibly be the result of that bodily disorder, into which he was thrown by the vision, and of the attachment of his mind to those new and astonishing divine revelations, with which during this time he seems to have been favoured.—Whether those discoveries, mentioned 2 Cor. xii. 1. and seq., and Gal. 1, 11, &c. seq., were made at this time, is matter of some debate, and may be examined in a more proper place
IMPROVEMENT.

Let us pause a little on this most amazing instance of the power and sovereignty of divine grace in our blessed Redeemer, and adore and rejoice in its illustrious triumph. Who of all the enemies of Christ, and of his church seemed ripest for tenfold vengeance? Whose name will be transmitted to posterity as the name of the person who most barbarously ravaged the innocent sheep and lambs of Christ's flock, and, like the ravenous wolf, most inhumanities, inhumanities, and slaughter against them, and the business of his life their calamity and destruction? Who but Saul; the very man for whom, under another name and character, we have contracted (if I may be allowed the expression) that tenderness of holy friendship, that next to that of his divine Master his name is written on our very hearts; and whom, though once the chiefest of sinners, we reverence as the greatest of the apostles, and love as the dearest of saints!

Thy thoughts, O Lord, are not as our thoughts, nor thy ways as our ways. (Isai. lv. 8.) He had Damascus in view, which was to be the scene of new oppressions and cruelties; he was, it may be, that very moment, anticipating in thought the havoc he should there make, when, behold, the light of the Lord breaks in upon them, and Jesus the Son of God condescends in person to appear to him, to expostulate with him? And how tender the expostulation! Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? Tender to Saul, tender to all his people; for it expresses his union with them, his participation in their interests; so that he looks upon himself as injured by those that injure them, as wounded by those that wound them.

Who, in this view, does not see at once the guilt and madness, and misery of persecutors? They have undertaken a dreadful task indeed, and will find it hard to kick against the pricks; they will surely find it so when Jesus appears to them in that vengeance which he here laid aside; when he sits on his awful tribunal to make inquisition for blood, and to visit upon them all their inhumanities and all their impieties.

But here our merciful Redeemer chose to display the triumphs of his grace, rather than the terrors of his wrath; and, behold how sudden a transformation is wrought! Behold Saul, who had so insolently assaulted his throne, now prostrate at his feet! sur-6 rendering, as it were, at discretion; presenting a blank, that Jesus might write his own terms, and saying, as every one who is indeed the trophy of divine grace will say, Lord, what wilt thou have
have me to do? As ready to employ all his powers for the service of Christ as he had ever before been to arm them for the destruction of his church.

7 What must the attendants of his journey think on such an occasion? If they were also converted, here were farther witnesses added to Christianity, and more monuments of divine grace erected; but if they were not converted, what an instance was this of their hardness and obstinacy? and even though their bodily sight was continued, how much was their blindness worse than his! Let us pray that we may all be taught of God; and if we are brought to resign ourselves to God in sincerity and truth, let us acknowledge the internal operations of his grace, as that to which the victory is owing, even where external circumstances have been most remarkable.

9 The situation in which Saul lay seems indeed to have been very melancholy, his sight lost, his appetite for food gone, and all his soul wrapt up in deep astonishment, or melted in deep contrition and remorse; but though he might sow in tears, he reaped in joy, (Psal. cxxvi. 5.) It appears that light and gladness were sown for him. He came refined out of the furnace, and these three dark and dismal days are, no doubt, recollected by him in the heavenly world, as the era from whence he dates the first beamings of that divine light in which he now dwells. Let us never be afraid of the pangs of that godly sorrow, which, working repentance to salvation not to be repented of, will soon be ten thousand times overbalanced by that exceeding weight of glory, and those full transports of eternal joy, for which it will prepare the soul.

SECT. XX.

Christ sends Ananias to Saul to restore his sight; Saul is baptized, and having preached the gospel at Damascus and Jerusalem, to avoid the rage of the Jews is sent by the disciples to Tarsus. Acts IX. 10.—31.

Acts IX. 10.

NOW while Saul lay blind at Damascus, in those melancholy circumstances which have been just described, it pleased the Lord, on the third day, to provide for his comfort and instruction: for there was a certain disciple at Damascus, whose name was Ananias, and he was

a Whose name was Ananias.] As we read of Ananias only in this story, it is difficult to determine who he was. Dr. Benson thinks him to have been a native of...
said the Lord in a vision, Ananias. And he said, Behold I am here, Lord.

And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the street, which is called Straight, and inquire in the house of Judas, for one called Saul of Tarsus: for behold, he prayeth, and hath seen in a vision a man named Ananias, coming in, and putting his hand on him, that he might receive his sight.

Then Ananias answered, Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints at Jerusalem.

And here he hath authority from the chief priests, to bind all that call on thy name.

But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for was a pious man according to the strictest precepts of the law, and had an honourable character among all the Jews who dwelt in the city, as well as among the disciples of Jesus, to whom he was allied in the strictest bonds. And the Lord appeared and said to him in a vision, Ananias. And he said, Behold, I am here, Lord, ready to receive and execute thy commands. And upon this the Lord [said] to him, Arise, and go to that which is called the Straight Street, and inquire in the house of Judas for a man of Tarsus, whose name is Saul; for behold, he is now praying with great earnestness and affection; and I have compassion upon him, and am determined to send him immediate relief: And accordingly he hath just now seen thee in a vision, as a man whose name it has been intimated to him is Ananias; and this person has been miraculously represented to him, as coming in, and laying his hand upon him, that he might recover his sight, which by a very extraordinary occurrence he has for the present lost.

And Ananias, astonished to hear such a name, mentioned in such a connection, answered, Lord, is it possible thou shouldst send me on any message of favour to Saul of Tarsus? I have heard of many concerning this man even at this distance, how violent a persecutor he has been, and how much evil he has done to thy saints at Jerusalem; And I am credibly informed, that he is now come hither to Damascus with an intent to persecute thy people here, and that he has authority from the chief priests to bind all that invoke thy name, and to carry them prisoners to Jerusalem to be tried there. But the Lord said unto him, Ananias, thou canst not imagine that I am ignorant of any of these things, or that it is for thee to debate my sovereign

of Jerusalem, and one who had carried the gospel from thence to Damascus. (Hist. Vol. I. p. 168.) Some of the ancients say, he was one of the seventy disciples. Others, from his being called a devout man according to the law, (chap. xxiii. 12,) have thought he was a proselyte of righteousness, as it is usual way to speak. Perhaps he was a native of Damascus, converted at the first Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit descended, and honoured with this embassy to Saul, as a Christian of the oldest standing in that place, and so, very probably an officer of the church there; which the commission to baptize him may farther intimate.

b And he hath seen, &c.] Mr. L'Enfant and several others think, these are the words of the historian, and therefore should be included in a parenthesis, and rendered And he, i.e. Saul, saw a man, &c. But then I should think his name would have been expressed, Koi 6 Eunp. X. r. 2.
He declares the service for which he designed him.

sovereign determinations; Go thy way, and execute immediately that message of mercy with which I have charged thee, for how great and aggravated soever his former transgressions may have been, I assure thee that this very man is to me a chosen vessel, whom I have by my free and sovereign grace ordained to bear my name as an apostle, and to preach my gospel; the truth of which he shall maintain with the greatest fidelity and courage before the Gentile nations and their kings, and before the children of Israel, and shall be made an instrument of eminent service: For I will immediately introduce him into a scene of action quite different from what he hath hitherto known, and will shew him how many things he who has done so much to oppose and injure my cause must at length suffer for my name; and he shall undergo them all with such cheerfulness, as shall render him an example to my saints in all the remotest ages of my church.

And upon this Ananias presumed not to object any farther, but with all readiness and joy undertook the message: He went therefore, and entered into the house to which he had been so particularly directed; and being introduced to the person whom he was sent to visit, and laying his hands upon him, he said, My dear brother Saul, for I most readily own thee under that relation, the Lord, [even] Jesus who appeared to thee on the way as thou camest hither to Damascus, hath sent me that thou mightest receive thy sight,

*A chosen vessel.] Beza justly observes, that an instrument of building, agriculture, &c. is often in Greek called ένοσίτις; and the word may very probably have that significance here. One would think, none who knew Saul's character before his conversion could imagine, there was so much merit and excellence in it, as that he should on this account be spoken of by Christ, as a choicest or singular valuable person: (Compare 1 Tim. i. 13—15.) Yet this has been hinted of late, though the apostle speaks of himself as separated from his mother's womb, Gal. i. 15, which, in concurrence with many other Scriptures, shows, how much more natural and reasonable it is, to acquiesce in the obvious and common interpretation we have given.

Before the Gentile nations, &c. Ananias could not infer from hence, that the gospel was to be preached to the Gentiles, while they continued uncircumcised, and so aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, &c. (a mystery, which Peter did not yet know;) for Christ might have used these expressions, had Paul been brought before Heathen kings for preaching him as the Messiah to the Jews and proselytes.

*I will shew him how many things he must suffer, &c.] If (as Grotius seems to think,) this intimates that Saul should presently have a revelation, and perhaps a visionary representation of all his sufferings among Jews and Gentiles, by land and sea, in tumults and imprisonments, of which this book and his epistles give so large a description: it must appear a most heroic instance of courage and zeal, that with such a view he should offer himself to baptism, and go on so steadily in his ministerial work. Never sure was there, on that supposition, an exacter image of Jesus, who so resolutely persevered in his work, though he knew all things that were to come upon him.

Something
Saul recovers his sight, and is baptized.

And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales; and he received sight forthwith, and was baptized. He received the Holy Spirit, and was quickly strengthened.
He immediately preaches Christ at Damascus.

strengthened, and recovered his former health and vigour; which it was his immediate care to employ in the service of his new master.

And as things now appeared to Saul in quite another light than they had done before, his disposition was entirely changed: and he associated with those whom he had come to persecute, and was for several days with the disciples at Damascus. And immediately after his conversion, he preached Christ in the Synagogues, with great freedom and zeal, and proved by incontestable arguments that he is the Son of God.

And all that heard him were astonished, and said, Is not this he who in Jerusalem was so exceeding zealous in his opposition to this way, as to spread desolation among them who called on this very name? and who came hither also to this end, that he might seize on all the followers of Jesus, whom he could find, and carry them bound to the chief priests? Whence then proceeds such an unaccountable change? But Saul, perceiving there was such particular notice taken of the matter, and hoping that his testimony might have so much the more weight, in consequence of the knowledge which they had of his former character, was strengthened and animated so much the more in his zeal and activity; and confounded the unbelieving Jews that dwelt at Damascus, confirming and evincing with the fullest evidence, that this Jesus of Nazareth is indeed the Messiah.

And when many days were fulfilled, in which several events happened which are elsewhere hinted at; and particularly, after he had made an excursion into Arabia to spread the gospel there, and returned to Damascus again, (Gal. i. 16—18,) the Jews, finding it was impossible to answer his arguments, or to damp his zeal, resolved to attempt another way to silence him, and, that they might effectually accomplish it, conspired with what is here said of his preaching immediately. I therefore imagine, his going into Arabia (to which Damascus now belonged,) was his making excursions from that city into the neighbouring parts of the country, and perhaps taking a large circuit about it, which might be his employment between the time in which he began to preach in Damascus, and his quitting it after repeated labours there to go to Jerusalem.
24 But their laying await was known of Saul: and they watched the gates day and night to kill him.

25 Then the disciples took him by night, and let him down by the wall in a basket.

26 And when Saul was come to Jerusalem, he assayed to join himself to the disciples: but they were all afraid of him, and believed not that he was a disciple.

The Jews conspired to kill him. But Providence so ordered it, that their design was happily discovered and made known to Saul, who therefore kept himself concealed, and would not give them any opportunity to execute their purpose; and though they watched all the gates of the city continually, and some assassin or other was waiting at each of them day and night, to attack and murder him if he should offer to retire from thence, yet they could not compass their cruel design. But as his present situation was still judged unsafe, and it was no way proper he should be thus confined, the other disciples of Jesus, anxious to preserve a life of so much value, took him by night, and let him down by the side of the wall in a basket, and so dismissed him; heartily committing him to the divine protection, by the assistance of which he escaped the hands of those blood-thirsty Jews that were lurking about the gates. (2 Cor. xi. 32, 33.)

And when Saul was come from Damascus to Jerusalem, he immediately attempted to associate with the disciples; but they all feared him, not believing that he, who had signalized himself so much by his rage against the church, was indeed a disciple; but suspecting that the change he professed was an artifice to work himself into their confidence, and by that means conspire to kill him. But Providence so ordered it, that their design was happily discovered and made known to Saul, who therefore kept himself concealed, and would not give them any opportunity to execute their purpose; and though they watched all the gates of the city continually, and some assassin or other was waiting at each of them day and night, to attack and murder him if he should offer to retire from thence, yet they could not compass their cruel design. But as his present situation was still judged unsafe, and it was no way proper he should be thus confined, the other disciples of Jesus, anxious to preserve a life of so much value, took him by night, and let him down by the side of the wall in a basket, and so dismissed him; heartily committing him to the divine protection, by the assistance of which he escaped the hands of those blood-thirsty Jews that were lurking about the gates. (2 Cor. xi. 32, 33.)

1 The Jews conspired to kill him.] What an amazing instance is this of the malignity of these wretched creatures, that, when so great a persecutor was by a voice and appearance from heaven, converted to Christianity, they should be so far from following his example, that they should attempt to take away his life. In this design they were assisted by the governor of the city under Aretas king of Arabia, (2 Cor. xi. 32, 33,) by whatever revolution it had come into his hands, after having been conquered by the Romans under Pompey. (Jos. Antiq. lib. xiv. cap. 2. [al. 4.] § 3.) See Dr. Benson's Hist. Vol. I. p. 196.

2 They watched all the gates of the city.] This shews, there were great numbers engaged in this bloody design; for Damascus was a large city, and had many gates. It seems that the Jews had not now so much power there, as they had when Saul was dispatched from the Sanhedrin: otherwise he might have been seized, and carried to Jerusalem, by some such commission as he himself had borne. But they had some interest in Aretas' deputy, and therefore endeavoured to compass his death by this indirect method. See Miscell. Sacra. Vol. I. Abstract, p. 15.

1 When Saul was come to Jerusalem.] This is the journey of which he speaks, Gal. i. 18, in which he formed his first acquaintance with Peter, the great apostle of the circumcision: But it is plain, as Mr. Cradock well observes, (in his excellent Apost. Hist. p. 55.) he went not to acknowledge his supremacy, but to see and converse with him as a brother and fellow-labourer: and it seems by the expression, ἐπισκέπτεται τοὺς ἄνθρωπους, that he lodged with him.

2 Suspecting that the change he professed was an artifice, &c.] It may seem strange, that so remarkable an event as Saul's conversion should be concealed so long from the Christians at Jerusalem: But it is to be considered, that there were not then such conveniences of correspondence between one place and another, as we now have; and the war then subsisting between Herod Antipas and Aretas, (Joseph. Antiq. lib. xviii. cap. 5. [al. 7.] § 1.) might have interrupted that between Damascus and Jerusalem: not to urge,
He comes to Jerusalem, and joins the disciples.

means to have it in his power to detect and ruin a greater number of persons. But Barnabas, whose information had been more express and particular, taking him by the hand with an endearing friendship, brought him to the apostles Peter and James, the rest being then absent from Jerusalem; and he related to them how he had seen the Lord Jesus Christ in the way to Damascus, and that he had spoken to him in a manner which had sweetly conquered all his former prejudices against the gospel; and how, in consequence of that change which was then made in his views and in his heart, he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus even at the apparent hazard of his life.

28 On this they gladly received him into their number, and into their most intimate friendship, and he was with them coming in and going out at Jerusalem, for a little more than a fortnight, (Gal. i. 18.) and with the greatest freedom he there bore his testimony to the gospel, preaching as boldly and as publicly in the name of the Lord Jesus as he had done before at Damascus.

And he spake and disputed; not only with the natives of Judea, but also with the Hellenists, or with those foreign Jews who used the Greek language, and came out of other parts to worship at Jerusalem, as being earnestly desirous that they might carry along with them the knowledge of Christ into their own lands: But some urge, that the unbelieving Jews, in order to prevent the argument which the Christians might draw from Saul’s conversion, might very probably affect to give themselves mysterious airs, as if he was only acting a contrived part; sure to find their account in such a pretence, by mortifying the disciples, and bringing Saul into suspicion.

a Barnabas taking him, &c.] Some have said, I know not on what evidence, that Barnabas was an old acquaintance of Saul, and had been formerly his fellow-student, under Gamaliel. (See Reading’s Life of Christ, p. 565.) Perhaps he might have seen Ananias, or some other witness of peculiar credit, on whose testimony he introduced him. It is evident, a most faithful and tender friendship was established between them from this time.

b To the apostles Peter and James, &c.] Paul himself tells us, that on his going up to Jerusalem he saw no other of the apostles, Gal. i. 19. Beza well observes, we are quite uncertain on what occasion the rest were then absent from Jerusalem. Had they been there, though Saul stayed but about a fortnight, he would no doubt have seen them.

Jews who used the Greek language.] So the Syriac version with great propriety explains the word Hellenists: of whom see note a on Acts vi. 1. § 19. Vol. II. p. 564.

I know not on what authority Epiphanius (as quoted by Beza on this text) asserts, that these Hellenists endeavoured to revenge themselves on Saul, by reporting every where, that his conversion to Christianity was the result of a disappointment in his addresses to the daughter of Caiphas the high-priest, as her father would not accept him for a son-in-law. If they told such an idle story, it must however imply, that they thought Saul a person of some rank, to have been capable of forming any such pretension.

27 But Barnabas took him, and brought him to the apostles, and declared unto them how he had seen the Lord in the way, and that he had spoken to him, and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus.

28 And he was with them coming in, and going out at Jerusalem.

29 And he spake boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus, and disputed against the Grecians: but they went about to slay him.
some of them were so enraged at this unexpected opposition from one on whom they had so great a dependance, that they attempted to kill him. And the brethren being informed [of it] judged it necessary to consult his safety without any delay; and therefore several of them conducted him to Caesarea with such dispatch, that he had not an opportunity of enjoying any interview with the churches in Judea which lay in his way, (Gal. i. 22.) and from thence they sent him away with proper recommendations to Tarsus, the noble capital of Cilicia, and his native place, where they apprehended he might meet with some support from his relations, and pursue the work of God with some considerable advantage; which he accordingly did.

Then the several churches that were formed through all Judea, and those more lately planted in Galilee and Samaria, being greatly edified by the seals that were set to the truth of the gospel, and by the confirmation of the news of Saul's conversion, (though they could not enjoy the benefit of his personal labours,) not only advanced in Christian knowledge and holiness, but had also an happy interval of external rest, as several circumstances in the civil state of the Jews at that time concurred, either to appease their enemies, or to engage them to attend to what

Conducted him to Caesarea.] I should have concluded, this had been the celebrated city of that name on the Mediterranean Sea, so often mentioned afterwards and from whence he might so easily have passed by ship to Tarsus, had not Paul himself told us, he went through the regions of Syria and Cilicia, (Gal. i. 21.) which intimates, that he went by land, and makes it probable that it was Caesarea Philippi near the borders of Syria, which is here spoken of. Compare note on Acts viii. 40. p. 30.

Being edified.] I follow Beza's construction of this intricate verse, as most agreeable to the Greek idiom, and refer the reader to Dr. Hammond's learned note on the word ἐνθυμήσειν, edified, for an account of that figurative expression, which is properly a term of architecture.

Had rest.] This is by no means to be ascribed merely, or chiefly, to Saul's conversion, who, though a great zealot, was but one young man, and whose personal danger, proves the persecution, in some measure, to have continued at least three years after it. I conclude therefore, the period spoken of is that, which commenced at, or quickly after, his setting out for Cilicia, and entirely acquiesce in Mr. Lardner's most judicious observation, (Credib. Book I. chap. 2. § 12. Vol. i. p. 203—210.) that this repose of the Christians might be occasioned by the general alarm which was given to the Jews, [about A. D. 40.] when Petronius by the order of Caligula, (incensed by some affront said to have been offered him by the Alexandrian Jews,) attempted to bring the statue of that emperor among them, and to set it up in the holy of holies; a horrid prophanation, which the whole people deprecated with the greatest concern in the most solicitous and affectionate manner. (See Joseph. Bell. Jud. lib. ii. cap. 10. [al. 9.] Antiq. lib. xviii. cap. 8. [al. 11.] Philo. de Legat. ad Cat. p. 1024. and the large account given of the State of the Jews at this time by Dr. Benson, Hist. Vol. i. p. 201—210. How long this rest continued, we do not certainly know, probably till Herod interrupted it, as we shall see hereafter, chap. xii.
REFLECTIONS ON THE DISTINGUISHING GRACE OF GOD TO SAUL.

And as the followers of Jesus were not corrupted by this respite, but continued with exemplary devotion and zeal walking in the fear of the Lord, and evidently appeared to be in an extraordinary manner supported by the aids, and animated by the consolation of the Holy Spirit, they were considerably multiplied by a new accession of members, whereby the damage sustained in the late persecution was abundantly repaired.

**Improvement.**

Ver. How admirable was the condescension and care of our blessed Redeemer, in sending good Ananias thus early as a messenger of comfort and peace to Saul in his darkness and distress. We cannot but wonder at the objections which were at first ready to rise in his mind, but must surely yield to the great authority by which they were overborne; go thy way, he is a chosen vessel. Thus does it become us to acquiesce in all our Lord appoints, in pursuance of the schemes of his electing love; and thus should we with brotherly affection, like that of this holy man, be ready to embrace even the greatest of sinners, when they are brought in humility to a Saviour's feet.

But when he is thus glorifying his power and his grace, what gratitude and love may he justly expect from those that are the happy objects of it? When the scales are fallen from their eyes, when they have given themselves up to him in the solemn seals of his covenant, when they have received the communications of his Holy Spirit, how solicitous should they be to love much, in proportion to the degree in which they have been forgiven? (Luke 19, 20, vii. 47.) And with what zeal and readiness should they immediately apply themselves, from a principle of gratitude to Christ, and of compassion to sinners, to declare that way of salvation into which they have been directed; and so far as they have opportunity, whether under a more public or private character, to lead others unto that Jesus on whom they have themselves believed.

And now let us with sacred pleasure behold the progress of grace in the heart of Saul: Let us view him rising from his bed of languishing.

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1 The consolation of the Holy Spirit. Some think παραδοθήσει signifies in the general patronage and assistance, as it well may, and therefore in the paraphrase I have expressed both.—De Dieu takes great pains to prove, that παραδοθήσει τω θεώ εξουσία, signifies, that they advanced more and more in religion, &c. But it seems much more natural to explain it of the accession made to their numbers, in consequence of that advancement in piety, &c.
Peter visits the saints at Lydda.

Languishing with a soul inflamed with love and zeal, testifying the gospel of Christ, and confounding the Jews that dwelt at Damascus. Let us behold him running the hazard of his life there, while their obstinate hearts refused to receive or endure such a testimony; and then returning to Jerusalem, desired to join himself to the company of those whom he had once despised and persecuted; and on that most public theatre, under the very eyes of that Sanhedrim from which he had received his bloody commission, openly bearing his testimony to that gospel which he had so eagerly attempted to tear up by the roots. Thence let us view him travelling to Tarsus, and visiting his native country, with a most earnest desire to fill Cilicia, as well as Judea and Damascus, with that doctrine which his divine Master had condescended to teach him, and to be the means of regeneration to the inhabitants of the place from whence he derived his natural birth.

And while we behold with reverence and delight the hand of God with and upon him, let us, as we are told the churches in Judea did, while he was by face unknown to them, glorify God in him, (Gal. i. 22, 24.) In all the labours and writings of Paul, the glorious apostle, let us keep Saul the persecutor in our eye, still remembering that (according to his own account of the matter) it was for this cause that he, though once the chief of sinners, obtained mercy, that in him, as the chief, Christ might shew forth a pattern of all long-suffering to them that should hereafter believe. (1 Tim. i, 15, 16.)—Well might the churches be edified by such an additional evidence of the truth and power of the gospel. May the edification be continued to churches in succeeding ages; and while a gracious Providence is giving them rest, may they walk in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, and be daily multiplied, established, and improved.

SECT. XXI.

Peter cures Aneas at Lydda, and then raises Dorcas from the dead at Joppa. Acts IX. 32, to the end.

Acts IX. 32.

HAVING dispatched this important history of the conversion of Saul, and of the vigour and success with which he set out in the Christian ministry; let us now turn to another scene, which happened during that peaceful interval mentioned above. Now it came to pass, at this favourable juncture, that the apostle Peter, as he was making a progress through all the [parts] of the neighbouring country, that he might rectify
He there cures Aeneas of a palsy.

rectify any disorders that occurred, and instruct and confirm the new converts in the knowledge and faith of the gospel, among the other places that he visited came also to the saints that dwelt at Lydda, a considerable town not far from the coast of the Mediterranean Sea. And he found there a certain man whose name was Aeneas, who had been long disabled by a palsy, and had kept his bed eight years, in so deplorable a state, as to be quite incapable of rising from it, or to be any way helpful to himself. And Peter seeing him, and perceiving in himself a strong intimation that the divine power would be exerted for his recovery, said to him, Aeneas, Jesus the true Messiah, in whose name I preach and act, now at this instant healeth thee, and operates while I speak, to strengthen and restore thy weakened frame: With a dependance therefore upon his almighty agency, arise and make thy bed. And upon this the palsy left him, and the disabled man was at once so strengthened, that he arose immediately, and did it.

And the miracle appeared so extraordinary to all the inhabitants of the learned and celebrated town of Lydda, and to those of the fruitful vale

he came down also to the saints which dwelt at Lydda.

And there he found a certain man named Aeneas, which had kept his bed eight years, and was sick of the palsy.

And Peter said unto him, Aeneas, Jesus Christ maketh thee whole; Arise, and make thy bed. And he arose immediately.

And all that dwelt at Lydda, and Saron, saw
Dorcas, an eminent disciple, dies at Joppa.

Saw him, and turned to the Lord.

36. Now there was at Joppa a certain disciple named Tabitha, which by interpretation is called Dorcas: this woman was full of good works, and alms-deeds which she did.

37. And it came to pass in those days, that she was sick and died: whom when they had washed, they laid her in an upper chamber.

38. And forasmuch as Lydda was nigh to Joppa, and the disciples had heard that Peter was there, they sent unto him two men, desiring him that he might come down to them. And he came.—

Joppa, a noted sea-port.] This was the nearest maritime town to Jerusalem, and was the only port belonging to it on the Mediterranean Sea, but was more than a day's journey distant from it, though some have said Jerusalem might be seen from thence. (Strab. Geog. lib. xvi. p. 532.) We find it mentioned in the Old Testament by the name of Japho, as belonging to the tribe of Dan. (Josh. xix. 46.) It was the place, to which the materials, for building Solomon's temple were brought in floats by sea, and carried from thence by land to Jerusalem. (2 Chron. ii. 16.) Jonah took ship from hence for Tarshish, (Jonah i. 3.) And, as it lay between Azotus and Caesarea, it was probably one of the cities where Philip preached the gospel in his progress; (Acts viii. 25.) There are still some remains of it, under the name of Jaffa.

Tabitha, who by interpretation is called Dorcas.] She might, as Dr. Lightfoot supposes, be one of the Hellenist Jews, and be known among the Hebrews by the Syriac name Tabitha, while the Greeks called her in their own language Dorcas.

They are both words of the same import, and signify a rose or foul; in which sense the word Joppa is often used by the Septuagint, Deut. xii. 15, 22. 2 Sam. ii. 18. Cant. ii. 9. iv. 5, &c. And thus the name might probably be given her in her infancy on account of her amiable form, which rendered her peculiarly pleasant in the eyes of her parents.—Others suppose it rather to have signified a wild goat; and so the name might be intended to allude to the sprightliness of her temper, or to the quickness of her sight.—For the etymology of the words, see Drusius and Grothus in loc.

f That he would not delay to come to them.] We can hardly imagine, they urged him coming, merely to comfort them under this breach: But, if they had any view to what followed, it was an astonishing instance of faith, as it does not appear the apostles had before this raised any one from the dead. Were we to have been judges, perhaps we should have thought it much better, that Stephen should have been raised than Dorcas; but we must submit our reasonings, on what we think fittest and best, to the
They send for Peter, and he raises her to life.

Acts
IX. 39. And Peter presently arose, and went to Joppa with them. And when he was come to Tabitha's house, they brought him into the upper chamber where she was laid out; and all the widows stood by him, weeping for the loss of such a benefactress, and shewing the coats and mantles which Dorcas made for charitable purposes, while she was yet continued with them. And Peter putting them all out, as he found in himself a powerful encouragement to hope, that the petition he was about to offer was dictated from above, and therefore should certainly be heard, kneeled down and prayed with great earnestness; and then turning to the body, he said, as with a voice of authority in the name and presence of his great Lord, the sovereign of life and death, Tabitha, arise. And he had no sooner spoke these words, but she opened her eyes, and seeing Peter, she immediately sat up. And giving her his hand, he raised her up on her feet, and having called the saints and widows, who were near the chamber, and had impatiently been waiting for the event, he presented her to them alive.

41 And this wonderful fact was presently known throughout all the city of Joppa; and many more believed in the Lord upon the credit of so signal a miracle. And as Peter was willing to improve so favourable an opportunity of addressing to them while their minds were impressed with so astonishing a miracle, he continued many days at Joppa, in the house of one Simon a tanner; from whence he was afterwards sent for to Cesarea, upon an extraordinary occasion, which will be related at large in the next section.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. Blessed apostle! who was thus enabled to imitate his divine Master, in what he himself has celebrated as the brightest glory of his human character, in going about doing good, (Acts x. 38.) and who had always a concern, like him, when he performed the infinitely wiser determination of Providence, or we shall be most foolish and miserable creatures.

Some render it a carrier. His business perhaps is mentioned, that it might appear the apostle was not elevated, by the dignity of the late miracle, above mean persons and things.
Reflections on Peter’s curing Æneas of a palsy.

the most important offices of kindness to men’s bodies, that all might be subservient to the edification and salvation of their souls!

Behold, in what has now been read, not only a disease which Ver. a continuance for eight years had rendered inveterate and hopeless, but death itself yielding to his command, or rather to the infinitely superior power of his Lord, the great conqueror of death for himself, and (adored be his compassionate name) for all his people too. It is most delightful to observe, with what solicitous care of pious humility Peter immediately transferred the eye and heart of Æneas, and of every spectator, from himself to Christ, while he says, Æneas, Jesus Christ healeth thee. He would not leave them any room for a surmise, as if it was by any power of his own that so astonishing a cure was wrought; but leads them to consider it as the act of Christ, and to ascribe the glory of the work to him whose minister he was, and in whose name he spake. Thus, if God favour us as the instruments of healing and animating those souls that were once lying in a hopeless state, not only disabled but dead in trespasses and sins, let us acknowledge that it is not we, but the grace of God that is with us. (1 Cor. xiv. 10.)

Great, no doubt, was the affliction which the disciples sustained, when so amiable and useful a person as Dorcas was taken away from them by death; a person whose heart had been so ready to pity the afflicted, and her hand to help them; a person whose prudent and diligence had also been as conspicuous as her charity; for she well knew there were circumstances in which to have given the poor the value of these things in money, would have been a much less certain and suitable benefit, than to furnish them with the necessary and conveniences of life thus manufactured for their immediate use: And surely the garments which she made and distributed, must be more precious to them in some degree for having passed through so kind a hand. Let us be emulous of such a character, in all the expressions of it which suit our circumstances in life, that when we are dead the memory of our good actions may survive, to the credit of our profession, and to the glory of God.

It was a circumstance which greatly enhanced the value of the intended miracle, that it was to call back from the dead so excellent a person: And with what humility, with what faith was it performed! Again does the servant follow not only the path but the very steps of his Lord, in dismissing all witnesses, that nothing might look like vain-glory, that nothing might interrupt the fervour of that address he was to pour out before God. First he bends his knees in prayer to the Lord of life, and then he directs his voice with
The door of faith is opened to the Gentiles.

SECT. XXI.

a divine efficacy to the dead. So may we, O Lord, learn to address ourselves to those under the power of spiritual death, with that spirit and vigour which we receive by solemn and affectionate intercourse with thee, who hast the life of nature and of grace at thy command.

Ver. Who can imagine the surprise of Dorcas, when thus called back to life again, or of her pious friends, when they saw her alive? For their own sakes, and the sake of the indigent and distressed, there was cause of rejoicing, and much more in the view of such a confirmation given to the gospel, and such a token of Christ's presence with his servants: Yet to herself it was matter of resignation and of submission, rather than of exultation, that she was called back to these scenes of vanity, which surely would hardly have been tolerable, had not a veil of oblivion been drawn over those glories which her separate spirit enjoyed. But we please ourselves with a charitable and reasonable hope, that the remainder of her days were yet more zealously and vigorously spent in the service of her Saviour and her God, yielding herself to him, as in a double sense alive from the dead. Thus would a richer treasure be laid up for her in heaven; and she would afterwards return to a far more exceeding weight of glory, than that from which so astonishing a Providence had, for a short interval, recalled her.

SECT. XXII.

Cornelius, an uncircumcised though pious Gentile, being divinely instructed to do it, sends for Peter, who, taught by a vision not to scruple it, returns with his messengers to Cæsaræa Acts X. 1—23.

ACTS X. I.

HITHERTO the gospel had been preached to the Jews alone; but God was now determined to open a way for the discovery of it to the Gentiles; and, that a proper decorum might be observed in the manner of doing it, he first sent it to one, who, though uncircumcised, was nevertheless a worshipper of the true God, whose story we shall here proceed to relate. Let it therefore be observed, that while Peter continued at Joppa, (where the conclusion of the former section left him) there was a certain man in the neighbouring and celebrated city of Cæsaræa, named Cornelius, who was a centurion, or commander of an hundred men, of that which is called the Italian cohors: a band of soldiers.
An angel appears unto Cornelius a devout Gentile.

2. A devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people and prayed to God always.

3. He saw in a vision evidently about the ninth hour of the day, an angel of God coming in to him, and saying unto him, Cornelius.

4. And when he looked on him, he was afraid, and said, What is it, Lord? And he said unto him, Thy prayers have been heard, and thine alms are remembered in God.

a. The Italian cohort or band of soldiers.] A Roman cohort was a company of soldiers commanded by a tribune, consisting generally of about a thousand. (See Plut. Lexic. in see Colors.) Many, with Groschi, have explained this, as if the meaning were, that Cornelius was a centurion of one of the cohorts belonging to the Italian legion; and the editors of the Prussian Testament, with our English follower, have ventured (quite contrary to the original,) to translate it so. But I refer the reader to the many learned and judicious things which Mr. Bischof has said, (at Boyle's Lect. chap. ix. § 1. p. 330—335,) to show, that the Italian legion did not exist at this time, and that the version here given is to be retained. I think it exceedingly probable, for the reasons he urges, that this was a cohort different from any of the legionic ones; and consequently, that Luke has here expressed himself with his usual accuracy; and that the mistake lies, as it generally does, in those who think they have learning enough to correct him. It is probable, this was called the Italian cohort, because most of the soldiers belonging to it were Italians; whereas Josephus mentions Caesar's cohorts, from whom it might be proper to distinguish this. Antiq. lib. xix. cap. 9. [al. 7.] § 2. & 8. lib. xx. cap. 8, [al. 6 § 7.] It might perhaps be the life-guard of the Roman governor, who generally resided in this splendid and celebrated city.

b. A man of distinguished piety, and one that feared God.] It is a very unwarrantable liberty, that is taken in the version of 1727, to translate the latter of these clauses, a proselyte. I hope in a proper place to show, that the name of proselyte was never applied by so ancient and correct a writer as Luke, to an uncircumcised person, and that there is no sufficient authority for the distinction so generally admitted by learned men, between proselytes of righteousness, who by circumcision became debtors to the whole law, and proselytes of the gate, who, worshipping the true God, renouncing idolatry, and submitting themselves to the observation of the seven (supposed) precepts of Noah, were allowed, though uncircumcised, to live among the Jews, and converse familiarly with them. But the question is too complex, and too important to be handled in these notes. I therefore only desire, that I may not be condemned for waving all those interpretations of Scripture, which depend on this distinction of proselytes, till my reasons for doing it have been examined and answered.

c. What is it Lord?] Dr. Whitby thinks these words are addressed to the angel, as if Cornelius had said, "Sir what would you say to me?" But it is both more literal and natural to render it as in the paraphrase.
He directs him to send to Joppa for Peter.

executed the commission with which he was charged, and said to him, Thy repeated fervent prayers, and thine alms with which they have been attended, are come up into the divine presence as a grateful memorial before God, far more pleasing to him than the most fragrant incense:

5 And he is now about to give thee a very singular demonstration of his favour, by discovering things to thee which it is of the highest importance that thou shouldst know: Send therefore some of thy men to Joppa, and fetch him [one]

6 Simon, whose surname is Peter: He lodgeth with one Simon, by trade a tanner, whose house is by the sea-side; and when he is come, as he will be instructed from above in the message he is to bring, he shall tell thee what thou must do for the security of thy final happiness.

7 As soon then as the angel who spake to Cornelius was gone, he was so earnestly desirous to hear what Peter was to say to him, that he immediately obeyed the orders that were given him; and calling two of his domestics, and a pious soldier who was one of them that always attended his person and waited upon him, And having related to them all [these] things just in the manner they had happened, he ordered them to go for Peter, and sent them away to Joppa that very evening.

9 And as they set out too late to reach the place that night, on the morrow, while they were on their journey, and drew near the city, Peter went up to the top of the house to pray; the flat open roof with which the houses in those parts were built, affording a more convenient place of retirement than could at that time be found within doors; and it was now about noon, or the sixth hour of the day. And he was very hungry prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God.

5 And now send men to Joppa, and call for one Simon, whose surname is Peter.

6 He lodgeth with one Simon a tanner, whose house is by the sea-side; he shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do.

7 And when the angel which spake unto Cornelius was departed, he called two of his household servants, and a devout soldier of them that waited on him continually:

8 And when he had declared all these things unto them, he sent them to Joppa.

9 On the morrow, as they went on their journey, and drew nigh unto the city, Peter went up upon the house-top to pray, about the sixth hour.

10 And he became very
Peter falling into a trance has a remarkable vision.

very hungry, and would have eaten; but while they made ready he fell into a trance;

11 And saw heaven opened, and a certain vessel descending into him, as it had been a great sheet, knit at the four corners, and let down to the earth:

12 Wherein were all manner of four-footed beasts of the earth, and wild-beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air.

13 And there came a voice to him, Rise, Peter; kill and eat.

14 But Peter said, Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten any thing common or unclean.

Peter was induced by this, or by some other reason, to retire for prayer at this time, it seems at least to have been customary in the first ages of the Christian church to offer up their daily prayers at the third, the sixth, and the ninth hour. See Clem. Alex. Strom lib. vii. p. 729.

1 Have taken a little refreshment.] After all that Lambor and several other writers have said, this seems to me the most proper import of the word ἀντιθάλεως, and the authorities produced by Raphelius, (Ann. ex Herod. p. 333, 344; and Elsner Vol. i. p. 407.) to prove that it signifies just the same as making a sort of meal confirm me in the contrary opinion.

2 An extasy or trance.] The word ἀντιθάλεως properly signifies such a capture of mind, as gives the person who falls into it a look of astonishment, and renders him insensible of the external objects round him, while in the mean time his imagination is agitated in an extraordinary manner with some striking scenes which pass before it, and take up all the attention. The reader may see some extraordinary instances of this kind mentioned by Gualterius, in his large note on this text.

3 Something—like a great sheet or wrapper.] As we do not in English call sheets vessels, I thought the general word here used more properly answered to εὐαγγέλιον, which extends to all sorts of household-furniture, as well as instruments of husbandry, war, &c. and has no word that I recollect in our language, exactly answering to it. The other word ἀντιθάλεως signifies any large piece of linen in which things are wrapped, and seems to have been an emblem of the gospel, as extending to all nations of men.

4 Kils and eva.] This appears a general intimation, that the Jewish Christians were, by the gospel, absolved from the ceremonial law, in which the distinction between clean and unclean meats made so considerable a part.—Mr. L'Enfant and some other critics, have observed, that the Jews looked on unclean animals as an image of the Gentiles; which, if it were the case, renders this emblematical representation peculiarly proper. See Grotius on ver. 15.
the day of my birth to this hour, *eaten any thing which is common or unclean*, nor took the liberty of tasting what is prohibited in itself, or polluted by any accidental circumstance that has attended it. And the voice [said] to him again the second time, *those things which God hath cleansed* by such a declaration of his will in bidding thee to eat of them, do *not thou any more call common*, but readily submit thyself to his directions, and leave it in the power of the great law-giver to change his precepts as he shall see fit. And that it might impress his mind the more, and he might give the more particular attention to it as to a thing established of God, the vision was not only doubled, but *this was done three times successively,* (compare Gen. xli 32,) and at last the vessel, with all that was in it, was *taken up into heaven again.*

17 And Providence so ordered it, that at this very juncture, while Peter was doubting in himself what the vision which he had seen might import, or what it was designed to point out to him, behold, the men who were sent from Cornelius, the pious centurion mentioned above, *having inquired out the house of Simon the tanner, stood at the door:* And calling to those that were within, *they asked if one Simon, whose sirname was Peter, lodged there:* And being told that he did, they desired immediately to speak with him on an affair which was of the utmost importance.

18 Now, as Peter was reflecting on the vision, and was attentively revolving it in his own mind, the Spirit, by an inward suggestion, *said unto him, Behold, three men are inquiring for thee:* Delay not therefore, but arise and go down to these men, and take the journey with them which they shall propose, *without any scruple of conversing with them,* or the person from whom they come; for *I have sent them,* and when thou comest to compare their message with what thou hast now seen, thou wilt easily know the intent of this vision, and the use thou art to make of it for thine own direction.

21 Then Peter instantly, before any message from the strangers could reach him, *went down from here be rendered therefore,* and have produced several instances from approved authors, in which it has that signification.

15 And the voice *spoke unto him again the second time,* What *God hath cleansed, that call not thou common.*

16 This was done thrice: and the vessel was received up again into heaven.

17 Now while Peter doubted in himself, what this vision which he had seen should mean; behold, the men which were sent from Cornelius, had made inquiry for Simon's house, and stood before the gate.

18 And called, and asked whether Simon which was surnamed Peter, were lodged there.

19 While Peter thought on the vision, the Spirit said unto him, Behold three men seek thee.

20 Arise therefore, and get thee down, and go with them, doubting nothing: for I have sent them.

21 Then Peter went down to the men which were sent unto him.
him from Cornelius; and said, Behold, I am he whom ye seek: what is the cause wherefore ye are come?

22 And they said, Cornelius the centurion, a just man, and one that feareth God and of good report among all the nation of the Jews, was warned from God by an holy angel, to send for thee into his house, and to hear words of thee.

23 Then called he them in, and lodged them. And on the morrow Peter went away with them, and certain brethren from Joppa accompanied him.

from the house-top to the men who were sent to him from Cornelius, and while they still continued at the door, said to them, Behold I am [the man] whom ye inquire for: What is the cause for which you are come hither?

And they told their story in a few plain words, 22 and said, Cornelius the Centurion, a righteous man, who feareth God, and hath a character attested by all the Jewish people, though he be not completely a proselyte to their religion, has been divinely instructed by the ministry of an holy angel, to send for thee to his house, and to hear words from thee upon some important subject, in the purport of which we do not doubt but thou art fully instructed, though it be not particularly known to us: We therefore desire, that, in compliance with his request, and this divine command, thou wouldst be pleased immediately to go with us to Caesarea.

Having therefore called them in, he entertained 23 [them] there that night: And the next day Peter set out with them; and some of the brethren who were inhabitants of Joppa went with him upon so great an occasion, which could not but excite their diligent attention, and raise an high expectation.

IMPROVEMENT.

We are now entering on a series of the story in which we ourselves are intimately concerned: We are going to see the first fruits of the Gentiles gathered into the church; and let us see it with gratitude and delight. Most amiable and exemplary is the character of Cornelius, who, though exposed to all the temptations of a military life, maintained not only his virtue but his piety too. He feared God, and he wrought righteousness; and daily presented before God prayers and alms, which added a beauty and acceptance to each other: And he was also an example of domestic, as well as of personal religion; as if he had been trained up under the discipline of that heroic general and prince, who so publicly and so resolutely declared before an assembled nation, even on the supposition of their general apostacy, As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord, (Josh. xxiv. 15.)

To him God was pleased to send the gospel, and the manner in which he sent it is well worthy of our remark. An angel appeared, not himself to preach it, but to introduce the apostle, to whom that work was assigned.—With what holy complacency of soul did
Reflections on Peter's being sent to preach to Cornelius.

Did Cornelius hear, by a messenger from heaven, that his prayers and alms were come up for an acceptable memorial before God! Ver. They whose prayers and alms are proportionably affectionate and sincere, may consider it as a testimony borne to the gracious manner in which an impartial and immutable God regards and accepts them.—Yet after all that they have done, let them learn by the conduct of this devout, upright and charitable man, not so to rest in their own virtues as to neglect inquiring after that way of salvation which God has established by his Son, but always ready to regard it as the one thing needful; let them maintain an uniformity in their character, by a diligent and candid attention to the declaration of it in the gospel.

Peter retires for secret prayer in the middle of the day, as if he had learned of David to say, Evening and morning, and at noon, will I pray and cry aloud. (Psal. v. 17.) He seeks a convenient retirement, and in that retirement the vision of the Lord meets him; a vision mysterious indeed in its first appearances, but gradually opened by divine Providence, the process of which renders many things plain, which at first seemed dark and unaccountable.

This vision declared to him in effect the abolition of the Mosaic ceremonial law, of which the precepts relating to the distinction of meats made so important a part; and we see here with pleasure, that strict as his observation of it had been from his very birth he was not now disobedient to the heavenly vision, but freely received the uncircumcised, and freely goes to be a guest to one who was so. Thus let us always preserve an openness and impartiality of mind, and in proportion to the degree in which we appear willing to know the truth, we shall find that the truth will make us free. (John viii. 32.)

Nevertheless, as it was an affair about which some difficulties might arise, and some censures may even in the way of duty be incurred, he takes some of the brethren with him, that their advice and concurrence in what he did might be a farther justification of his conduct, to those who were not perhaps sufficiently aware of the divine direction under which he was. How agreeable a mixture of prudence and humility! Let it teach us on all proper occasions to express at once a becoming deference to our brethren, and a prudent caution in our own best intended actions, that even our good may not be evil spoken of, when it lies in our power to prevent it. (Rom. xiv. 16.)
Peter comes to Cornelius and his friends at Cesarea.

SECT. XXIII.

Peter coming to Cesarea, preaches the gospel to Cornelius and his friends; and upon their believing it and receiving the Holy Spirit by a miraculous effusion, he without farther scruple admits them into the church by baptism, though they were uncircumcised Gentiles. Acts X. 24, to the end.


And the morrow after they entered into Cesarea: and Cornelius waited for them, and had called together his kinsmen and near friends.

25 And as Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him, and fell down at his feet, and worshipped him. But Peter took him up, saying, Arise, for I also myself am nothing more than a man as thou art, and pretend to no right to such profound respects as these, but am ready in civil life to pay thee all the regard that is due to thee. This happened just at the entrance of the house, and thus discoursing with him, he went in and found many of the friends and acquaintance of Cornelius gathered together; so that Peter, at the first sight of them, expressed some sur-prise. And he said to them, You cannot but know that it is looked upon among us as unlawful for a man that is a Jew to join in friendly conversation with a Gentile, or to come into the house of one of another nation, who is not at least naturalized by circumcision and a full conformity to our law, which I am well aware that you are not: Nevertheless God hath lately shown me that I am to make no such distinction, and to call no man common or unclean. Wherefore...


When falling down at his feet, paid homage to him. He could not, as some have fancied, imagine Peter to be an angel, considering how the angel had spoken of him. But his reverence for him as a disciple, messenger, together with the custom which prevailed in the East of expressing the highest respect by prostration, might induce him to fall down at his feet, and offer an homage, which Peter wisely and religiously declined.

when I was sent for hither by your messengers, I came away without any contradiction or debate; I would ask therefore, and desire to know from your own mouth, on what account you have sent me.

30 And Cornelius, with all frankness and seriousness said, It is now four days ago that I was fasting till this hour, and at the usual time of evening prayer, at the ninth hour I prayed in my house; and behold, to my unspeakable surprize a man appeared and stood before me in bright raiment, whom I perceived to be an angel: And as this put me in some fear, he said in a most gentle and engaging manner, Cornelius, thy prayer is heard, and thine alms are graciously remembered before God, who is about to give thee a most important token of his favourable regard to thee: Send therefore to Joppa, and call hither Simon whose surname is Peter; he lodgeth in the house of [one] Simon, a tanner, by the sea side; who, when he is come, shall speak to thee of various things now unknown to thee, but on thine acquaintance with which, new scenes of duty and happiness shall be opened upon thee. Immediately, therefore, that very evening, I sent unto thee the messengers whom I now see returned with thee; and thou hast done very well, and acted like a pious and charitable person in coming. Now therefore, we are all here present before God, disposed to hear with a becoming reverence and attention, all those things which God hath given thee in charge.

34 Then Peter opening his mouth, and addressing himself to them with a seriousness and solemnity answerable to so great an occasion, said, Of a truth, I perceive, and am now fully satisfied, whatever my former prejudices were as to the difference between the Jews and Gentiles, that God, the great Father of the whole human race, is no respecter of persons; and accepts no man merely because he is of such a nation, nor so determines his regards as to confine his favours,

b On what account have you sent for me. Peter knew it by revelation, and by the messengers who were sent from Cornelius: but he puts him on telling the story, that the company might be informed, and Cornelius himself awakened and impressed by the narration; the repetition of which, even as we here read it, gives a dignity and spirit to Peter's succeeding discourse, beyond what we could otherwise so sensibly perceive.
35 But in every nation, he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him.

36 The word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ: (he is Lord of all:)

37 That word (I say) you know, which was published throughout all Judea, beginning first at Jerusalem.

He that feareth him, and worketh righteousness.] This, for any thing I can see, might be supposed the case of many, who were far from being in any degree Jewish proselytes, and had never heard of the Jews and their religion, as it was certainly the case of many, before the peculiarities of Judaism existed, and even before the institution of the Abrahamic covenant. I think this text proves, that God would sooner send an angel to direct pious and upright persons to the knowledge of the gospel, than suffer them to perish by ignorance of it: But far from intimating, that some such persons may be found among those that reject Christianity, when offered to them in its full evidence, it determines nothing concerning the existence of such in every nation, though it tells us, how God would regard them, supposing them to exist.

That message which he sent, &c.] I was long of opinion with Erasmus, that the whole of this verse was to be referred to the first words of the next, as if Peter had said, You know the word which he sent, &c.—even the word which was published, &c. But upon farther consideration I have changed my view of it, and preferred that interpretation which Irenæus and Chrysostom anciently proposed, and in which Beza, Grotius, De Dieu, L'Enfant, and most of the moderns have followed them. And I have acquiesced in it, not only in regard to the great judgment of some of these writers, and their exquisite skill in the Greek idiom, but also because I see not how Peter could reasonably take it for granted, that Cornelius and his friends were acquainted with the message of peace and pardon sent to Israel by Jesus Christ, that is, with the gospel, which if they had known, there would have been no necessity of his own embassy to them. It must be allowed indeed, that Christ did not expressly preach this doctrine, and declare the admission of the uncircumcised Gentiles into his church: but he had dropped several hints concerning the extent of his kingdom, which Peter, on such a striking occasion as this, might recollect as referring to this great event. (Compare Mat. viii. 11, 12; John x. 16, 18. 32; Mark xvi. 15, 16; and Matt. xxviii. 19, 20.) In this view there was a peculiar propriety in mentioning Jesus as Lord of all: But nothing can be more unnatural than Heinsius's gloss and version.—The Locos who preached peace, &c. is the Lord of all. The Locos is never said to do any thing by Jesus Christ. e Concerning
He preaches the gospel to Cornelius and his friends; and took its rise from Galilee, just in your neighbourhood, after the baptism which John preached who went before that extraordinary person to prepare his way: I mean the report [concerning] Jesus of Nazareth, how God anointed him with the Holy Spirit, and with a power of performing the most extraordinary miracles in attestation of his divine mission; who went about, and passed through the whole country, doing good wherever he came; and particularly healing all those who were oppressed by the tyranny of the devil, dispossessing those malignant spirits of darkness with a most apparent and irresistible superiority to them, for God himself was with him, and wrought by him to produce those astonishing effects. And we his apostles, of whom I have the honour to be one, are witnesses of all things which he did, both in the whole region of the Jews, and particularly in Jerusalem, their capital city; for we attended him in all the progress which he made, beholding his miracles, and hearing his discourses: Whom nevertheless this ungrateful people were so far from receiving with a becoming regard, that they slew him in a most infamous manner, even hanging him upon a tree, and crucifying him, as if he had been the vilest of malefactors and slaves. Yet this very person, though so injuriously treated by men, hath the ever-blessed God raised up from the dead on the third day, according to repeated predictions; and, as a demonstration of the truth of it, hath given him to become manifest after his resurrection, and evidently to appear. Not indeed to all the Jewish people, nor to return to those public

* Concerning Jesus of Nazareth.* He was not ashamed to own, that the person he preached as the Messiah came out of a place so infamous among the Jews as Nazareth, since all the reproaches of that kind were so abundantly rolled away by the glorious circumstances which he afterwards relates.—The difficulty here is, in the construction of the original seems to be the best removed by supposing the word concerning, and so referring it (as Sir Norton Knatchbull and others have done) to the report which they had heard. The sense however will be the same, if never be considered as redundant, (in the same manner as we find the like expression used, Mat. xii. 56.) and the clause rendered as it is in our translation, *He preached Jesus, &c.*—It is more natural to admit either of these explications, than to repeat the words *[you know]* from the preceding verse, (as some would do) and to suppose that Peter said to persons who were strangers to the gospel, *You know Jesus of Nazareth.*

[Not to all the people.] This is not a place for vindicating the wisdom and righteousness of that dispensation of Providence, which ordered that Christ should not appear publicly after his resurrection. Many valuable writers have done it at large. See Mr. Ditton on the Resur. Part III. § 60—70. Bishop Burnet's four Disc. p. 52—56. Dr. Sykes on Christianity, chap. x. p. 164. S. reg. Mr. Fleming's Christol. Vol. III. p. 494—498. Bishop Blackwall at

out all Judea, and began from Galilee,after the baptism which John preached.

38 How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost, and with power; who went about doing good and healing all that were oppressed of the devil: for God was with him.

39 And we are witnesses of all things which he did, both in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom they slew and hanged on a tree.

40 Him God raised up the third day, and showed him openly,

41 Not to all the people,
public assemblies of them which he had often visited, but to certain witnesses, who were before appointed by God for this purpose; even to us, who conversed very intimately with him before his death, and were so far favoured that we have eaten and drank together with him several times after he rose from the dead; so that we can, and do with the greatest certainty bear witness to the truth of this important fact. And he hath given in charge to us to proclaim the glad tidings of salvation by him to the people, and to testify wherever we come that it is he, this very Jesus of Nazareth, who is the person appointed by God [to be] the glorious and majestic judge in the great day of future account, both of the living and the dead, who shall all be convened before his throne, and receive their final sentence from his lips. And if this were a proper audience wherein to insist upon this subject, I might copiously shew, (as in due time I may do) that to him all the Jewish prophets bear witness, and that from what they foretold concerning him it appears, that every one who believeth on him shall receive the forgiveness of their sins by his name, though their crimes be attended with aggravations ever so heinous, for which there was no pardon to be had by means of any other dispensation.

While discourse to an audience of Gentiles, the apostle Peter first mentions Christ's person, miracles, and resurrection, and contains himself with telling them in the general that there were many prophets in former ages who bore witness to him, without entering into a particular enumeration of their predictions. And Limborch recommends this as the best way of beginning the controversy with the Jews themselves, as being liable to least cavil. It would however have been easy to have proved the truth of what the apostle here asserts, from several testimonies of the prophets, (had it been proper for that audience,) as will appear by comparing Isa. lxi. 11. Jer. xxxi. 34. Dan. ix. 24. Mic. vii. 19. Zech. xiii. 1. Mal. iv. 2. We may farther observe, that we do not read of Peter's working any miracle on this great occasion, as the preceding testimony of the angels, and the descent of the Holy Spirit in his miraculous gifts while he was speaking to them, were sufficient proofs, both of the truth of the gospel, and of Peter's being an authorised interpreter of it.

The
While Peter was yet speaking these words, the Holy Spirit, without the imposition of the apostle's hands, fell on Cornelius and upon all his friends that were hearing the word, in such a visible appearance of cloven tongues, as that in which he fell upon the apostles and other disciples at the day of Pentecost. (Compare chap. xi. 15)

And all they of the circumcision who believed, as many as came with Peter upon this occasion, were exceedingly astonished, to see that the miraculous and important gift of the Holy Spirit which they supposed peculiar to the Jewish nation, was poured out upon the Gentiles also; who, as they imagined, could not have been admitted into the church without receiving circumcision, and so subjecting themselves to the observance of the whole Mosaic law. But now they found it was incontestably evident, that even those who were not circumcised might be partakers with them of the highest privileges; for they heard them all speaking in divers languages which they had never learned, and glorifying God for the rich display of his grace by the gospel, in such exalted sentiments and language, as abundantly proved their minds, as well as their tongues, to be immediately upon a divine operation.

Then Peter yielding to the force of evidence, however contrary to his former prejudices, with great propriety answered, Can any one reasonably forbid that water should be brought, or offer to insist upon the common prejudices which have prevailed among us, that these persons should not be baptized in the name of our Lord Jesus, and solemnly received into his church,

who

1 The Holy Spirit fell upon all, &c.] Thus were they consecrated to God, as the first-fruits of the Gentiles; and thus did God direct that they should be baptized, giving this glorious evidence of his receiving them into the Christian church, as well as the Jews.—It is observed by Dr. Lightfoot, that one important effect of this descent of the Holy Spirit upon them probably was, that hereby they were enabled to understand the Hebrew language, and so had an opportunity of acquainting themselves with the prophecies of the Old Testament in the original.

k They of the circumcision—were astonished.] The Jews had long ago a proverb among them, “That the Holy Spirit never rests upon an Heathen.” This astonishment shews, that notion prevailed even in these Christians, whether the proverb was so old or not.

Can any one forbid water, &c.] Erasmus supposes a transposition of the words here, as if it had been said, “Who can forbid, that these should be baptized with water?” But it seems most natural to understand it, (as Dr. Whiston does,) “Who can forbid that water should be brought?” In which view of the clause one would naturally conclude, they were baptized by pouring water upon them, rather than by plunging them in it.
received the Holy Ghost, as well as we? It is surely his seal set upon them, and it would be an arrogant affront to him to refuse them admission to the fullest communion with us.

And as none of the brethren that came with him pretended to object any thing against it, he immediately ordered them to be baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus; choosing to make use of the ministry of his brethren in performing that rite, rather than to do it with his own hands, that by this means the expression of their consent might be the more explicit. And being thus received into the church, they had so high a value for the conversation of this divine messenger, and for the joyful tidings which he brought them, and were so earnestly desirous to be farther instructed in that faith, into the general profession of which they were baptized, that they intreated him to continue with them several days, and omitted nothing in their power to make his abode agreeable, as well as useful.

**Improvement.**

There is no room to wonder, that a man of Cornelius's benevolent character should be solicitous to bring his kindred and friends into the way of that divine instruction, which he hoped himself to receive from the revelation now opening upon him. What nobler or more rational office can friendship perform, and how deficient is every thing that would assume such a name, which doth not extend itself to a care for men's highest and everlasting interests.

It must, no doubt, be some prejudice in favour of Peter on the minds of these strangers, to see that he declined that profound homage which good Cornelius, in a rapture of humble devotion, was perhaps something too ready to pay him. The ministers of Christ never appear more truly great, than when they arrogate least to themselves; and without challenging undue respect, with all simplicity of soul, as fellow-creatures and as fellow-sinners, are ready to impart the gospel of Jesus, in such a manner as to shew that they honour him above all, and have learned of him to honour all men.

That humble subjection of soul to the divine authority which Cornelius, in the name of the assembly, expressed, is such as we should always bring along with us to the house of the Lord: And happy is that minister, who, when he enters the sanctuary, finds his
his people all present before God, to hear the things which God shall give him in a charge to speak to them, and heartily disposed Ver. to acquiesce in whatever he shall say, so far as it shall be supported by those sacred oracles by which doctrines and men are now to be tried.

34, 35 Well might Peter apprehend so natural a truth as that which he here professeth, that God is no respecter of persons, but every where accepteth those that fear him, and express that reverence by working righteousness: Let us rejoice in this thought, and while we take care to shew that this is our own character, let us pay an impartial regard to it wherever we see it in others, still cultivating that wisdom from above, which is, without partiality, as well as without hypocrisy. (Jam. iii. 17.)

36 We also know that important word which God sent to Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ, the Lord of all. May we know it to saving purposes, and believing in him receive the remission of our sins in his name! May we shew ourselves the genuine disciples of this divine Master, by learning of him, according to our ability, to go about doing good, sowing, as universally as may be, the seeds of virtue and happiness wherever we come! And then, should the treatment which we meet with be such as our Lord found, should we be despised and reproached, should we be per-secuted and at length slain, he who raised up Christ from the dead, will in due time also raise up us; having suffered, we shall reign with him, (2 Tim. ii. 12.) and share that triumph in which he shall appear as the appointed Judge both of the quick and dead.

41 Let us not esteem it any objection against his divine mission, that God did not humour the wantonness of men so far, as to cause him to appear in person to all the people after his resurrection; it is abundantly enough that he appeared to such a number of chosen witnesses, who were thus enabled to evidence the truth of their testimony by the demonstration of the Spirit and of power, (1 Cor. ii. 4.) Of this what passed with regard to these converts, when the Holy Spirit fell upon them and they spake with tongues, is an instance worthy of being had in everlasting remembrance: Let us rejoice in this anointing of the first-fruits of the Gentiles, by which their adoption into the family of God was so illustriously declared; and let us be ready, after the example of Peter, whatever preconceived prejudices it may oppose, to receive all whom the Lord hath received, from whatever state his grace hath called them, and cordially to own them as brethren whom our heavenly Father himself doth not disdain to number among his children.
Peter being questioned about his interview with Cornelius, gives a particular and faithful narration of it, for the satisfaction of his brethren, who were under strong Jewish prejudices. Acts XI. 1—18.

Acts XI. 1.

And the apostles and brethren that were in Judea, heard that the Gentiles had also received the word of God.

2 And when Peter was come up to Jerusalem, they that were of the circumcision contended with him,

3 Saying, Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them.

4 But Peter rehearsed the matter from

a Contended with him.] How good an argument soever this may be, as Bishop Burnet and many others urge it against the supremacy of Peter, it is none against the inspiration of the apostles; for it only proves, that some, who did not well understand the principles on which they went, took upon them, without reason, to arraign their conduct, and consequently did not in this respect pay a becoming deference to them. It plainly shows, how little regard was had to any uncircumcised persons, whatever profession they might make of worshipping the God of Israel; and

b Peter.

37 The Jewish converts blame Peter for going to the Gentiles.
Peter informs them how he was warranted to do it; he had seen, which was evidently designed to dispose him to such a condescension, opened to them [the matter] in order, and gave them a full detail of all the particulars with the exactest truth and simplicity, saying, I was, just before this extraordinary event happened, which I confess may well surprise you, praying, in a proper place of retirement, in the house of Simon the tanner in the city of Joppa; and in a trance I saw a remarkable vision, even something like a great sheet descending from heaven, which was let down by the four corners; and it was so directed, that it came close to me. And as I was looking attentively upon it, I observed and saw a great variety of four-footed creatures of the earth, and wild beasts and reptiles, and fowls of the air: But I took notice of this circumstance, that they were all of sorts prohibited by our law. And I heard a voice from heaven saying to me, Arise, Peter, kill any of these animals that are here before thee, and eat freely of whatever thou plearest. But I said, by no means, Lord; for nothing common or unclean, nothing prohibited in itself or polluted by any accident, hath ever entered into my mouth, and by thy grace nothing of that kind ever shall. And the voice answered me the second time from heaven, Those things which God hath cleansed, by bidding thee to eat of them, do not thou any more call common. And this was done three times, exactly with the same circumstances, that it might make the greater impression upon my mind: And at length all the things which I had seen were drawn up again into heaven.

And behold, at that instant, as soon as the vision was over, while I was thinking what might be the meaning of it, three men were come to the from the beginning and expounded it by order unto them, saying,

5 I was in the city of Joppa praying; and in a trance I saw a vision, a certain vessel descend, as it had been a great sheet, let down from heaven by four corners; and it came even to me.

6 Upon the which when I had fastened mine eyes, I considered, and saw four-footed beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air.

7 And I heard a voice saying unto me, Arise, Peter; slay and eat.

8 But I said, Not so, Lord: for nothing common or unclean hath at any time entered into my mouth.

9 But the voice answered me again from heaven. What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common.

10 And this was done three times; and all were drawn up again into heaven.

11 And behold, immediately there were three men already come unto the house where

b Peter opened to them [the matter] in order. And it is probable, that they were only some of the Jewish converts, who questioned Peter about what he had done, he might, no doubt, have overborne them, by urging his apostolical authority, and referring them to the miracles by which it was established: But he chose to treat them in a more gentle and condescending manner, giving therein a most amiable example of humility and condescension, which it will be the glory and happiness of gospel ministers to follow, in circumstances which bear any resemblance to this.

c Were all of sorts prohibited by our law. There is no sufficient reason to suppose, as most have done, that all manner of living creatures, clean and unclean, were presented to Peter in his vision; for though it be expressed in very general terms, especially in the first account of it, (chap. x. 15.) yet it is manifest, there would have been no room for Peter's scruples to eat, had he been seen any creatures there; but what he apprehended to be prohibited by the law. And the translation I have given of that verse, which perfectly agrees with the original, will not oblige us to suppose, that any animals were there, but such as were esteemed unclean.

d God
And that the Spirit had been poured out upon them:

where I was, sent from Caesarea unto me.

12 And the Spirit bade me go with them, nothing doubting. Moreover, these six brethren accompanied me, and we entered into the man's house:

13 And he showed us how he had seen an angel in his house, which stood and said unto him, Send men to Joppa, and call for Simon, whose surname is Peter:

14 Who shall tell thee words, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved.

15 And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning,

16 Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost.

17 Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as he did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, what was I that I could withstand God?

18 When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.

d God hath then given to the Gentiles also repentance unto life.]

In this the they acquitted for the present, till the controversy was renewed by some fierce zealots, chap.
only made them the overtures of it, but has graciously wrought it in some of their hearts; and we shall rejoice to see it prevailing more and more.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 1, 2. With what joy ought every one who loved God or man to have heard, that the Gentiles had received the word of the gospel; yet we find those of the circumcision disputing with Peter upon the occasion: Their prejudices as Jews were so strong, that they thought the passage to the church must still lie through the synagogue, and so remembered that they were disciples of Moses, as almost to forget that they were the disciples of Christ. Let us always guard against that narrowness of mind which would limit even the Holy One of Israel to the bounds which we shall mark out, and exclude others from his favour, that our own honour may appear so much the more signal.

But let us with pleasure observe the mildness and prudence of Peter; warm as his temper naturally was, and high as he was raised by the divine favour; though he had been so remarkably turning the key of the kingdom of heaven itself, and opening it by immediate divine direction to the uncircumcised, that they might enter; yet he stands not upon the general honours of his apostolic character, nor insists upon that implicit submission to him, which some, with no such credentials, have been ready to arrogate to themselves. But he condescends to younger brethren, and gives them a plain, distinct and faithful narration of the whole matter, just as it was. Thus let us learn, in the spirit of gentleness, humility and love, to vindicate our actions, where they have been uncandidly mistaken. And when we have the pleasure to know that they are right, let us enjoy that happy reflection to such a degree, as not to suffer ourselves to be disquieted, and put out of temper, by the rash charges and censures of those, who will judge our conduct before they have examined into it; and are disposed, more to their own detriment than it can possibly be to ours, to err on the severe extreme.

chap. xv. 1, 5. But I beg leave to observe here, that it would have been very improper for them thus to have spoken of the Gentiles in general, if they had only meant such, as had already forsaken idolatry, and were worshippers of the true God. They plainly speak of those to whom this repentance was granted, as persons who before, according to their apprehension, were in a state of death; in which condition, it is probable they had thought all uncircumcised persons to be; and without doubt, they must mean to include the idolatrous Gentiles among the rest, as those who were most evidently and certainly so.—To render this clause, "God has granted salvation to the Gentiles on the terms of their repentance," is, I think, determining and limiting the sense in an unwarrantable manner.
Peter, we see, very circumstantially recollected what he had seen, and heard. Let it also be our care to treasure up in our memory, and to inscribe on our hearts, whatever God shall be pleased, Ver. though in more ordinary methods of instruction, to discover to us. And never let us be disobedient to any intimation of the divine will; but on the contrary, always most cheerfully acquiesce in it. Who are we, that in any respect we should resist God? and particularly, who are we, that we should in effect do it, by laying down rules relating to Christian communion, which should exclude any whom he has admitted? O that all the churches, whether national or separate, might be led seriously to consider, how arrogant an usurpation that is on the authority of the supreme Lord of the church! O that the sin of this resistance to God may not be laid to the charge of those, who perhaps in the main with a good intention, in an overfondness for their own forms, have done it, and are continually doing it!

Like these brethren of the circumcision, let us be willing to yield to the force of evidence, even when it leads us into an unexpected path. And let us glorify God, when he is pleased to manifest himself to those, who seemed to us to have the least room to hope for such a favour. Whether it be to us, or to others, that God hath granted repentance unto life, may we rejoice in it, and adore his goodness therein! For it is certain that none of the delights of life, which men so fondly pursue, are half so valuable as that godly sorrow which worketh repentance unto salvation.

SECT. XXV.

The gospel is preached at Antioch. Barnabas coming thither confirms the disciples, who are there called Christians. Agabus visits them, and foretells the famine, which occasions their sending alms to Jerusalem. Acts XI. 19, to the end.

Acts XI. 19.

NOW they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen, travelled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to none but unto the Jews only.
blessings of it. But some of them, who bore a part in this work, were men that were natives of the island of Cyprus, and of the province of Cyrene in Africa, who having heard the story of Peter’s receiving Cornelius, though a Gentile, into the communion of the church, took occasion from thence to imitate his example, and having entered into Antioch, spake freely to the Greeks as well as to the Jews; preaching the gospel of the Lord Jesus to them, and inviting them to accept of his invaluable privileges.

And the hand of the Lord was remarkably with them in this pious labour; and a great number of the Gentiles were so effectually convinced and wrought upon by their discourses and miracles, that they believed, and turned unto the Lord Jesus; consecrating themselves to the service of God through him, with the most humble dependance on his blood and grace.

And the report concerning him came to the ears of the church that was at Jerusalem, who, as they had lately seen a way was opened for the conversion of the Gentiles, received the tidings of this further progress of the gospel with peculiar pleasure; and, desirous to confirm them in the faith into which they had been initiated, they sent forth Barnabas to go as far as Antioch: Who when he was come thither, and beheld the grace of God manifested towards them in bringing them to the knowledge of himself received reading, be no opposition between the conduct of these preachers, and those mentioned in the preceding verse. Here undoubtedly we have the first account of preaching the gospel to the idolatrous Gentiles; for it is certain, there is nothing in the word ἐξεποίησαν; to limit it, to such as were worshippers of the true God: Nor can I find the least hint in the New Testament of the two different periods that some have supposed, in the first of which it was preached only to those called proselytes of the gate, and in the second to those who were before idolaters; yet the hypothesis seems in itself so improbable, that it stands in need of the strongest proof before it can be admitted, as I may elsewhere shew at large. It is well known, that as the Greeks were the most celebrated of the Gentile nations near Judea, the Jews called all the Gentiles by that general name. Compare Rom. x. 12. 1 Cor. xii. 19. Gal. iii. 28. Col. iii. 11. See also 2 Mac iv. 10, 15, 26. vi. 9. xi. 24.

20 And some of them were men of Cyprus, and Cyrene, which when they were come to Antioch, spake unto the Grecians, preaching the Lord Jesus.

21 And the hand of the Lord was with them; and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord.

22 Then tidings of these things came unto the ears of the church, which was in Jerusalem; and they sent forth Barnabas, that he should go as far as Antioch.

23 Who when he came, and had seen the grace of God, was glad...
The disciples are first named Christians at Antioch.

24 For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost, and of faith: And much people was added unto the Lord.

25 Then departed Barnabas to Tarsus, for to seek Saul.

26 And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch.—

A good man.] The author of Miscell. Sacra, thinks the expression signifies, that he was a man of a sweet and gentle disposition, not disposed to lay any unnecessary burdens on these new converts, and so the more fit to be employed at Antioch in these circumstances. Abstract, p. 18.

\[\text{Finding him he brought him to Antioch.}\]

This might do, as very rightly judging, that since he was by his country a Greek, though by descent a Hebrew of the Hebrews, (that is, descended from two Jewish parents) he would be peculiarly fit to assist him in his great work; especially considering, on the one hand, his fine accomplishments as a scholar, and on the other, his extraordinary conversion and eminent piety and zeal.

\[\text{By divine appointment first named Christians at Antioch.}\]

They were before this called by the Jews, Nazarenes, or Galileans; and by each other, disciples, believers, brethren, or saints. But they now assume the name of their great leader, as the

Platoni
Agabus comes to Antioch, and foretells a famine.

And in these days, while Barnabas and Saul were at Antioch, certain prophets who were divinely inspired to foretell future events, came from Jerusalem to Antioch. And one of them, whose name was Agabus, stood up, in one of their assemblies, and signified by the immediate direction of the Spirit, that there should shortly be a great famine over all the land; which accordingly came to pass quickly after in the days of Claudius Cesar, the Roman emperor then reigning. And, in consideration of the distress which it might bring along with it, the disciples at Antioch determined, that according to the respective abilities of each, they should send a liberal

Platonists, Pythagoreans, Epicureans, &c. with much less reason had done the name of theirs. I think with Dr. Benson, that the use of the word χρηστασις implies, that it was done by a divine direction, and have translated it accordingly: (Compare Matt. ii. 12, 22. Luke ii. 26. Acts x. 22. Heb. viii. 3. xi. 7. xii. 23.) and therefore am not solicitous to enquire, whether the name were given them, as Ecclesiastical History tells us, by Eusebus, (who is mentioned by it as their first bishop,) or by Barnabas, or Saul, as Bishop Pearson seems to think. (See Pearson, on the Creed. p. 103.) The learned and candid Witsius thinks it a circumstance of remarkable wisdom, that this celebrated name should arise from Antioch, a church consisting of a mixture of Jews and Gentiles, rather than from Jerusalem dignified in so many other respects; and that it was a kind of victory gained over Satan, who from Antioch had some ages before raised so many cruel persecutors of the church of God. Wits. de Vit. Paul. cap. iii. § 5.

As a great famine over all the land ] As it is certain, ευμακριβος may have such a limited signification, (see note on Luke ii. 1, Vol. i. p. 62.) I follow this translation, as what appears to me safest, and refer my reader to those reasons for doing it, which he may find at large in Mr. Lardner's Credibility. (Book I. chap. 11. § 2. Vol. i. p. 599. & seq.) The learned Archbishop Usher has endeavoured to prove the famine in the fourth year of Claudius [A. D. 44.] universally. But Mr. Biscoe rather thinks, there may have been a reference here to what happened in some years, and observes, (as Mr. Rappeye had done before,) that there were famines in various places during the reign of Claudius, not only in Judæa, which began the latter end of his fourth, and was continued in his fifth, sixth, and seventh years, (of which Josephus takes notice, Antiq. lib. xx. cap. 2. § 6. & cap. 5. [al. 3.] § 3,) but also at Rome in his second; (as mentioned by Dio, lib. ix. p. 671.) and that Syria in his fourth, (Oras. lib. vii. cap. 6.) Greece in his ninth, (Euseb. Chron. p. 204.;) and Italy in his tenth and eleventh, (Tacit. Annal. lib. xii. cap. 43. and Sicel. Claud. cap. 18.) were visited with the like calamity: He therefore supposes all these to be included in this prophecy. (Norm. et Boyle's Lect. ch. iii. § 3. p. 60—66.) But the persons, with regard to whom it is here mentioned, were so much more concerned in the first of these, which seems also to have been the most extreme, that I am still of opinion, the prediction chiefly refers to that, which was the drought in which Helena queen of Adiabene so generously relieved the Jews with corn and other provisions from Egypt and Cyprus; which, by the way, proves that the famine was not universal at that time. See Wits. Mecetem. de Vit. Paul. cap. iii. § 6.

According to the respective abilities of each. ] I think this all that is intended by γερας. It is, though the words might more literally be rendered, according to the abundance which each had: for it is hardly to be imagined, that every Christian at Antioch was in abundance or plentiful circumstances: Nor do I think any thing can be inferred, concerning the extent of the famine, from this circumstance; as it plainly appears not to have been begun, when the collection was resolved upon.

They were called Christians first at Antioch.

27 And in these days came prophets from Jerusalem unto Antioch.

21 And there stood up one of them named Agabus, and signified by the Spirit, that there should be a great famine throughout all the world: which came to pass in the days of Claudius Cesar.

27 Then the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief.
ral contribution to the assistance of the believing brethren, who dwelt in such great numbers in Judea, and had many poor among them, who would particularly need to be supported in a time of such calamity. And this accordingly they did, sending [it] to the elders \( b \) to be delivered to the deacons, or to be otherwise distributed as they should think fit; being satisfied that they would make a prudent use of what they sent them upon this occasion by the hand of Barnabas and Saul, who took the money they had collected to Jerusalem; and as the famine lasted for some time, were afterwards employed in prosecuting this generous and necessary work by new collections elsewhere.

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**IMPROVEMENT.**

Let us with pleasure observe, how in the instance here recorded, Ver, the blood of a martyr was the seed of the church; an event after-wards so common, that it became a proverb. Thus they who were scattered abroad on the death of Stephen every where dispersed the gospel; and let us be thankful that some of them brought it to the Gentiles as well as to the Jews. Freely did it run, and illustriously was it glorified; but with whatever evidence and advantage they preached it, with whatever spirit and zeal (in some measure the natural consequence of having been called to suffer so dearly for it) the success of all is to be traced up to the hand of the Lord that was with them. This engaged men to believe and turn unto the Lord; to stop in their career of sin, to pause upon their conduct, to Christians. It seems much more rational with the late Lord Barrington, to conclude from hence, that there was now no apostles at Jerusalem, and that the elders, having been competently instructed in Christianity, were left to take care of the church there, while the apostles took a tour into the neighbouring parts more fully to instruct and confirm the new converts. (Museiri. Sacra. Essay ii. p. 110, & seq.) This is the first mention that we have of elders in the christian church; and Dr. Hammond has a large and very remarkable note here, in which he labours to prove, that these elders were the same officers with those called presbyters or bishops and thinks there is no certain evidence from scripture, that the name of elders or presbyters was given so early to another order between them and deacons: But this is not a place to enter accurately into enquiries of this nature.

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1 They should send to the assistance, &c.] Vitringa has shown at large, that it was common for the Jews, who lived in foreign parts, to send relief in times of distress to their poor brethren at Jerusalem. (Vitring. de Synag. vet. lib. iii. Part I. cap. 13, p. 809-811.) This tender care in these Gentile converts at Antioch would tend powerfully to conciliate the affections of their circumcision brethren, and was some acknowledgement, though not an equivalent, for the voluntary poverty many of the saints in Judea had incurred by the sale of their estates, as well as for the peculiar persecutions which they underwent from their unbelieving countrymen.

2 Sending it to the elders.] I am much surprised, that a person of Dr. Whitby's judgment should think the persons here spoken of were the elders of the Jewish synagogues, considering that these were the men, who would of all others have been most ready to injure and defraud the
to accept of the Lord Jesus Christ as the Saviour, and to consecrate themselves to God through him. O that his hand might be with all his ministers! O that such success might everywhere be produced by its powerful operations!

23 Well might Barnabas rejoice when he saw such a scene, and more distant brethren be pleased when they heard of it; for what is the triumph of the gospel but the triumph of human happiness? And who, that has cordially received the gospel, does not feel his whole heart most tenderly interested in that? He wisely and properly exhorted them, having once embraced this divine and glorious dispensation, *with full purpose of heart to cleave unto the Lord*; and there was great need of such an exhortation, as well as a very solid foundation for it: Such difficulties will arise in our christian course, though we should not meet with persecutions like theirs, that we shall need a most steady *resolution of mind* in order to our *adherence to the Lord*; but let us arm ourselves with it, and *hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering* since he is invariably *faithful who hath promised*. (Heb. x. 23) Such exhortations as these will be most effectual when they come, as in this instance they evidently did, from a *good man*, whose example will add authority to his words, and so be a means not only to quicken religion in the hearts of those who have already embraced it, but to propagate it to those who are yet strangers to it.

With pleasure let us reflect upon this honourable name, which the disciples of Jesus first wore at Antioch; they were called *Christians*, as it seems by divine appointment: And would to God that no other, no dividing name, had ever prevailed among them! As for such distinguishing *titles*, though they were taken from Apollos, or Cephas, or Paul, let us endeavour to exclude them out of the church as fast as we can; and while they continue in it, let us take great care that they do not make us forget our most ancient and most glorious *title*. Let us take heed, that we do not so remember our *difference* from each other in smaller matters, as to forget our mutual *agreement* in embracing the gospel of Christ, and in professing to submit ourselves to him as our common *Prince and Saviour.*

The notice of the *famine* brought to them by Agabus the prophet, awakened the generosity of the *Christians at Antioch*; to supply the pressing necessities of the saints in Judea. The possibility, at least, that it might have affected themselves, would have led some to conclude it the part of prudence to keep what they had to themselves: But they argued much more wisely, chusing thus to *lay up in store a good foundation against the time to come*, and to secure a title to that peculiar care of divine providence which
which is promised and engaged to those who mind not every one his own things, but each the welfare of others and of all. (Phil. ii. 4.)

SECT. XXVI.

Herod having slain James, seizes Peter, and commits him to prison, who is delivered by an angel, in answer to the prayers of the church. Acts XII. 1—19.

Acts XII. 1.

Now about that time Herod the king stretched forth his hands to vex certain of the church.

2 And he killed James the brother of John with the sword.

a Herod Agrippa.] So the Syriac expressly renders it; and there is no reason to doubt, especially considering the similarity of circumstances mentioned below, that this Herod was the Prince whom Josephus calls Agrippa, which probably was his Roman, as Herod was his Syrian name. He was not (as Grotius by a slip of memory says,) the son but the grandson, of Herod the Great by his son Aristobulus, (Joseph. Antiq. lib. xviii. cap. 5. [al. 7.] § 4.) nephew to Herod Antipas who beheaded John the Baptist, brother to Herodias whom that incestuous and adulterous tetrarch married, and father to that better Agrippa, before whom Paul made his defence. (Acts xxv. 13, & seq.) Caius Caligula with whom he had an early friendship, when he became emperor, released this Agrippa from the confinement under which Tiberius had (on that very account) kept him, and crowned him king of the tetrarchy of his uncle Philip, to which he afterwards added the territories of Antipas, whom he banished to Lyons in Gaul. (Joseph. Antiq. lib. xviii. cap. 6. [al. 8.] § 10, 11. & cap. 7. [al. 9.] § 2.) In this authority Claudius confirmed him, and made him king of Judea, adding to his former dominions those of Lysanias. (Antiq. lib. xiv. cap. 5. [al. 4.] § 1.) Mr. Fleming thinks, it was high treason against the Messiah for him to assume the title of king of Judea, and that this arrogance, joined with his cruelty, rendered him more worthy of that terrible death described below. Clem. Chriol. Vol. III. p. 338.

b Slew James—with the sword.] This was our Lord's prediction relating to him fulfilled. (Mat. xx. 23.) I know not how far we are to depend upon the tradition, which we find cited by Eusebius, (Eccles. Hist. lib. ii. cap. 9.) from a book of Clemens Alexandrinus now lost, in which he reported,—"that the person who had accused James observing the courage with which he bore his testimony to Christianity, was converted, and suffered martyrdom with him." But I think it is very beautifully observed by Clarus, (who had a great deal of the true spirit of criticism,) that this early execution of one of the apostles, after our Lord's death would illustrate the courage of the rest in going on with their ministry, as it would evidently shew that even all their miraculous powers did not secure them from dying by the sword of their enemies.
And as he found that no immediate vengeance overtook him on this account, and likewise saw that this was acceptable to the Jews, whose favour he laboured by all possible means to conciliate, he went on farther, and presumed to seize Peter also, renowned as he was for such a variety of miracles, which were wrought by him at Jerusalem in the name of Jesus: And it was in the days of unleavened bread, during the feast of the passover that Peter was apprehended.

And having seized him at this public time, when so many Jews were come together from all parts, he put him in prison delivering him to the custody of four quaternions of soldiers, that is, to sixteen, consisting of four in each party, who were to relieve each other by turns, watching him constantly by day and night: This Herod ordered for the greater security of so noted a person, intending immediately after the passover to bring him out to the people, to be made a spectacle to them in what he should suffer: as Jesus his master had been on the first day of unleavened bread.

In the mean time therefore, till the day of execution came, Peter was thus kept in the prison. But as the importance of so useful a life was well known to his christian friends, earnest and continued prayer was, with great intenseness and assiduity of mind, made to God on his account, by the whole church at Jerusalem. And the event quickly showed that this their earnest supplication was not in vain; for when Herod was ready to have brought him out to execution, [even] that very night, before he had designed to do it Peter was quietly sleeping between two soldiers, in full calmness and serenity of mind, though bound with two chains, which joined each of his hands to one of the soldiers that lay on either side of him, in such a manner that it was (humanly speaking) impossible he should have risen without immediately awakening them: And the other two guards then on duty stood

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*Saw that this was acceptable to the Jews.] Josephus tells us, "that this prince was a great zealot for the Mosaic law, that he dwelt much at Jerusalem, and was fond of all opportunities of obllging the Jews, as his grand-father Herod had been of pleasing s Rangers," a character well uniting what Luke here says of him, See Joseph. Antiq. lib. xix. cap. vii. § 9.

4 Bound with two chains.] It is well known, that this way of securing prisoners of importance, by chaining each of their hands to a guard, was practised among the Romans, and the reader may find authorities to this purpose produced by Gro-
And behold the angel of the Lord came upon him, and a light shined in the prison; and he smote Peter on the side, and raised him up, saying, Arise up quickly. And his chains fell off from his hands.

And the angel said unto him, Gird thyself, and bind on thy sandals: And so he did. And he said unto him, Cast thy garment about thee, and follow me.

And he went out, and followed him; and wist not that it was true which was done by the angel: but thought he saw a vision.

When they were past the first and the second ward, they came unto the iron gate that leadeth unto the city which opened to them of his own accord: And they went out, and passed on through one street, and forthwith the angel departed from him.

And when Peter was come to himself, he said, Now I know of a surety, that the Lord hath sent his angel, and hath delivered me out of the hand of Herod, and from all the expectation of the people of the Jews.

And Peter being come to himself, and recovered from the first astonishment of such an extraordinary event, said, Now I know truly that the Lord Jesus Christ, in whose cause I was going to suffer, hath (as he formerly did, chap. v. 19) sent his angel, one of the many heavenly spirits under his command, and hath delivered me from the hand of Herod, who intended my death, and from all the expectation of the Jewish people: who, after the many beneficial miracles I have wrought,
wrought among them, were thirsting for my blood, and waited impatiently to see my execution.

Such was the grateful sense that Peter had of his deliverance; and recollecting where he was, he presently concluded whither to go, and came to the house of Mary the mother of John, who was surnamed Mark, where many Christians were gathered together and were spending the night in prayer earnestly for his deliverance: And God answered them, while they were yet speaking; for he had now discharged the prisoner for whom they were so much concerned and brought him to the very house in which they were assembled. And as Peter stood, and knocked at the door, of the outer gate which entered into the house; that they might guard against the danger of admitting any person whom they did no not know, a maiden whose name was Rose, went to the door, to listen and enquire who was there. And he had no sooner answered, but knowing Peter's voice, she was so transported with joy and surprise, that she did not open the gate; but running to the company that were assembled in the house, she told [them] that Peter was actually standing at the gate.

And they said to her, Surely thou art distracted, to imagine so incredible and so impossible a thing. But she persisted in it, that she was sure she heard his voice; and confidently affirmed that it was undoubtedly so. Then, as they knew not how to account for it, they said, in their confusion of thought, It is then probably his angel, who has assumed his form to bring us some tidings of him; or perhaps he is executed with buildings, you pass into it. And it is probable, that this was no small house, as many were assembled there.

To enquire who was there.] That this is the most exact signification of the original word παράστασις, is abundantly demonstrated by Raphelius, (Annot. ex Xen. p. 139.) and Elsner, (Observ. Vol. I. p. 411.) I render this maiden's name Rhoda by the English name Rose, as whenever I meet with Greek names in use among us, I think it most natural to give the English termination; and shall only add, that Grotius has well observed, the Jews, frequently gave to their female children the name of agreeable flowers or plants: Thus Susannah signifies a lily, Hecate, a myrtle, Tamar a palm-tree, &c.
executed in prison, (as John the Baptist was in the night,) and his separate spirit has appeared, as a token of its being employed, as angels are, in ministering to the church on earth.

But Peter in the mean time continued knocking, upon which they went out several of them together; and when they had opened [the door,] they saw him, and rejoiced to find that he was there, but were exceedingly astonished at the sight of him. And as he found upon his coming in among them, that his presence threw them into a confused transport, which grew so loud that he could not easily be heard, he beckoned unto them with [his] hand to be silent, and related to them how the Lord had conducted him out of prison, by the ministry of an angel: And having told them the particulars of what had passed, he said, Let care be taken to inform James, and the other brethren of these things, that they may magnify God for this great deliverance, and consider it as an engagement to serve him with greater resolution and zeal. And presently departing from thence, he went to another place, and continued some time in retirement, that he might avoid the search which his persecutors would of course make for him, when they should find that he was gone. And accordingly, as soon as it was day, there was no small tumult among the soldiers on his account, and no search was spared that they might know

16 But Peter continued knocking; and when they had opened the door, and saw him, they were astonished.

17 But he beckoning unto them with the hand to hold their peace, declared unto them how the Lord had brought him out of the prison. And he said, Go shew these things unto James, and to the brethren. And he departed, and went unto another place.

18 Now as soon as it was day, there was no way or other, no argument can be drawn from it, as to the truth of either of these suppositions.

b It is his angel, &c.] Though I have followed the more common rendering here, I pretend not certainly to say, that Sir Tho. Browne is mistaken, (in his Religion Medici, p. 19) when he says, (as Clarinus, Cameron, and Hammond also do,) that the word агьгшй here signifies messenger among the Jews, as to be sure it often does, (Compare Mat. xi. 10. Mark i. 2. Luke vii. 24, 37. ix. 32. and John. i. 23.) They might perhaps think, he had sent somebody, who telling her, he came from Peter, she by mistake apprehended it to be him. But I think it much more probable, that as she avowed that she knew his voice, they then judged it to be something supernatural. It is by no means certain, they imagined this to be his guardian angel; for Philo speaks of it as a received notion among the Jews, that the souls of good men deceased officiated as ministering spirits. (See Phil. de Sacrif. Coin & Abelis, p. 131. St. de Gigavibus, p. 286. and Dr. Waterland's Sermon. Vol. ii. p. 90.) But whatever their notion was, one

What
Reflections on the death of James, and Peter's deliverance.

SEC. xxi. 18. And when Herod had sought for him, and found him not, he examined the keepers, and commanded that they should be put to death.

PROV. IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 1. We have now before us the death of another martyr, and that martyr an apostle, and that apostle no less a person than James the brother of John, who was also one of the chosen favourites and companions of our blessed Lord; and not the less dear because so early dismissed from mortal life and labour, and dismissed by a violent and bloody death. He was slain with the sword; but that blow, which was hardly if at all to be felt, in one short moment transported him to his long-loved Lord, and introduced him to that endeared converse with Jesus in his heavenly presence, of which all the most intimate hours spent with him upon earth, not excepting that of the transfiguration itself, (to which he was an eye witness) were but an imperfect shadow.

3 But how strange was it, that this should please the Jews! To see the slaughter of one of the most excellent persons that ever adorned them with such severity, lost an apprehension of a miraculous deliverance should have prevailed, and so Christianity has gained, as it probably did, additional strength. What had so notoriously happened to all the twelve apostles in a circumstance much resembling this, (chap. ii. 19, &c.) would no doubt add great weight to such a representation; and it seems that this seasonable interposition of Providence, joined with the death of Herod soon after, put a speedy end to this persecution.

1 What was become of Peter.] Elsner, Obscr. Vol. I. p. 412. and Raphelius, (ex Xen. p. 160.) have so abundantly proved, that τι μετά το παρθένον αὐτοῦ ευδοκία may with great propriety be thus rendered, that I see no reason to imagine, as Erasmus here hints, that it may refer to some notion, that Peter had been transformed, perhaps by magic art, into some form or shape different from his own.

2 Ordered them to be led away to execution.] It is well known, that the word ἀπακοπή has this signification. See Beza and Heslins in loc.—He probably punish-
adorned the Church of Christ, and without exception one of its greatest benefactors, his Lord only excepted, that ever had appeared in all the list of the prophetic and inspired race: Yet thus Ver.
it was that they proceeded to fill up the measure of their fathers; (Mat. xxiii. 32.) and such was still the hardness of their hearts, that after having rejected the message, they soon came to hate the messengers, and to thirst for their blood: The surest token of wrath coming upon them to the uttermost; as indeed it was but a few years more, and such an execution was done upon them, as seemed to be the accumulated vengeance due for all the righteous blood which had been shed from Abel to James.

Peter was also imprisoned, and was bound with chains: And no doubt, the prayers and tears, with which the church were contending for his delivery, would appear exceedingly despicable to his enemies, if known by them; but they found to their confusion, that his Redeemer was strong. (Jer. I. 34.) The Lord Jesus sent an angel to him; who found him, secure in his innocence, and happy in his hope, sleeping between those two guards, who perhaps in a few hours were to have been his executioners; and sleeping so sweetly sound, that the brightness of the angel’s presence did not immediately awake him. The angel smites him, and his chains fall off; the iron gates are opened, and the prisoner is set at full liberty. So does the angel of death smite as it were, but with a gentle blow, the servants of Christ, and the fetters of mortality fall off; the doors of the dungeon are opened, and they are led into the New Jerusalem, where they find another kind of society, another kind of rest, another kind of joy, than Peter knew even in the first transports of his deliverance.

The prayers of the night were added to those of the day. Pious men and women, the aged and the young, were assembled on this important occasion: And while they were praying, God answered: while they were yet speaking, He heard. (Isa. lxv. 24.) Behold, Peter is himself sent among them, to bring them the astonishing news of that real deliverance, which at first appeared to him but as a vision of the night. What delight must such a mercy give them! especially when considered as an answer of prayer! What an encouragement must it be to them all, to hold just the profession of their faith without wavering, and in every future exigence by prayer and supplication to make their requests known unto God. (Phil. iv. 6.) Peter was solicitous, it might be known to the surviving James, and the other apostles, that they might glorify God in him, and might take encouragement from it, to go on boldly in the prosecution of their work. With such views should we own the goodness of God in any deliverance he grants us, that others may learn to confide in him, and may join their praises with ours.

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Vol. III. Herod
Herod in his disappointment turns his rage on the soldiers, and makes those unhappy men the victims of his wrath. Unhappy
Ver. indeed, if they had not learnt from Peter whilst they had him in 18, 19 their power, that lesson which his charity would be so glad to teach them, in what he apprehended to be the last moments of his life; to believe in Jesus for life and salvation. But whatever they suffered, a much severer vengeance was reserved for Herod, on whom God quickly began to visit that innocent and pious blood which he had spilt, and that too after which he had thirsted; for in his sight he must have appeared the murderer of Peter, as well as of James.

SECT. XXVII.

Herod, on his reconciliation to the people of Tyre and Sidon, makes a public oration, for which he is extravagantly applauded; but for his pride on that applause is miraculously destroyed. Acts XII.—19,—24.

Acts XII.—19.

We have just given an account of the miraculous manner in which Peter was delivered from the cruel attempt of Herod, and of the transport of rage in which that tyrannical prince ordered the guards to be put to death, though in reality they had been no way accessory to his escape. And now after this disappointment, Herod departed from Jerusalem, and passing from Judea to the city of Cesarea, he abode [there ;] till in the midst of all his pride and glory, the judgment of God overtook him, and providence avenged the death of James, and the designed murder of Peter, in a most awful manner on this persecuting prince.

And very observable were the circumstances of his miserable end, as introductory to which it must be observed, that Herod was highly incensed against the Tyrians and Sidonians, on account of some supposed affront which he had received from them, which provoked him so far, that having vowed a severe revenge, he was preparing

Passing from Judea to Cesarea.] This is the same Cesarea, which was formerly called Straton's Tower, and had been rebuilt by Herod the Great. (See note on Acts viii. 40, p. 30.) Josephus (who gives us an account of the death of Herod Agrippa, which greatly illustrates this of St. Luke,) says, that he went to Cesarea in the third year of his reign over the whole country, to celebrate games there in honour of Claudius Cesar, to whom he had been so much obliged. (Antiq. lib. xix. cap. 8. [at. 7.] § 2.) It seems, that the oration afterwards mentioned was made in a full theatre there.
preparing with all speed to make war upon them: But as they were a trading people, and were apprehensive of the consequences of the king's displeasure, they unanimously came to a resolution to send proper representatives to Caesarea, to appear before him; and having found out means of gaining Blastus, the king's chamberlain, to espouse their interest, and being introduced by him, they begged for an accommodation of the difference, and earnestly intreated he would grant them terms of peace; which they found it absolutely necessary to sue for, because their country was nourished and maintained by that of the king; they having little corn of their own growth, and not being able to subsist without a constant supply of provisions from Judea and Galilee. (Compare 1 Kings v. 11. and Ezek. xxvii. 17.) And to make the transaction as solemn as possible, upon a set day which he thought proper for that purpose, when a grand assembly was held, Herod came forth with great magnificence and splendour, arrayed in a royal habit, and being seated in a public theatre upon the throne, made an oration to them with a great deal of state and affectation of eloquence; expressing at large his clemency and condescension in admitting them to favour, when he could so easily have subdued them by force. And the people, who flocked in multitudes to this grand spectacle, were so charmed with his appearance and address, that they all cried out, as in a rapture, as soon as he had done speaking, Surely [it is] the voice of a god that we hear, and not that of a mortal man: And the unhappy prince instead of expressing a just indignation at such base and impious flattery, heartened to it with a secret complacency.

21 And upon a set day, Herod arrayed in royal apparel, sat upon his throne, and made an oration unto them.

22 And the people gave a shout, saying, It is the voice of a god, and not of a man.

Arrayed in a royal habit.] Josephus expressly says, that his fine robe was richly wrought with silver, which, reflecting the rays of the rising sun with an unusual and almost insupportable splendor, gave his flatterers an occasion of complimenting him with the title of a deity. Mr. Fleming imagines, they therein referred to the glory with which the Deity used to appear, and that Herod, being impious enough to assume the honour of it, provoked the divine Majesty beyond any farther sufferance, so that he sent a disease upon him, which rendered him equally contemptible and miserable. (Plem. Christol. Vol. II. p. 500.) Elsner has given several instances of the madness of Heathen princes, who arrogated divinity to themselves, and some of them came to infamous ends. (Observ. Vol. i. p. 413, 414.) But to be sure, Herod's knowledge of the true God, and of his jealousy with respect to divine honours, rendered his guilt incomparably more aggravated than theirs.
The word of God upon this grew more successful.

But immediately all this haughty parade was disgraced and exposed; for an angel of the Lord, by an awful though invisible operation in his vitals, smote him with a sore and grievous disease, because he gave not God the glory, in rejecting these blasphemous applauses. On which he was presently forced to quit the place in extreme torture, and being miserably eaten and tormented (as his grandfather Herod the great had been,) with a vast number of small worms, which bred in his bowels, and rendered him a most nauseous and horrible spectacle to all about him, he expired in equal agony and infamy; sunk as much below the common state of human nature, as his flatterers had endeavoured to raise him above it.

And upon this the word of God grew more and more successful, and in every place where the seed of the gospel was sown, the number of believers was considerably multiplied, and their faith greatly established: And after all the opposition of its enemies, who had endeavoured to extirpate it, the progress of Christianity was apparently promoted by the concurrence of these extraordinary events, in the deliverance of Peter, and the death of Herod, that cruel persecutor, under such evident tokens of divine vengeance.

IMPROVE-

*a An angel of the Lord smote him.* Josephus tells us (in the place cited above,) "That, as he did not rebuke this impious flattery, he was immediately seized with exquisite and racking tortures in his bowels, so that he was compelled, before he left the place, to own his folly in admitting such acclamations, and upbraided those about him with the wretched condition in which they then saw their god; and, being carried out of the assembly to his palace, he expired in violent agonies the fifth day after he was taken, in the fifty-fourth year of his age, and the seventh of his reign;" ( reckoning from the time of his first advancement, by Caligula, to the tetarchry of his uncle Philip;) being the fourth year of the emperor Claudius, A. D. 44. — Some have supposed, when it is said an angel smote him, that this is only a Jewish phrase, to signify he was suddenly seized with this disorder; But I think it expresses the real, though invisible agency of a celestial spirit on this occasion, Compare 2 Sam. xxiv. 16. 2 Kings xix. 35.

*b Being eaten with worms.* Beza and Eisner think, κηλευθόραμα signifies in the general consumed with vermin, and may express the disease called morbus particularis, of which, as the latter of these critics has shown, (Vol. I. p. 417, 418,) several persecuting and cruel princes have died. (Compare 2 Mac. ix. 9, and Euseb. Eccles. Hist. lib. viii. cap. 16.) I think with Dr. Lardner, (Credib. Book I. chap. I. § 6, Vol. I. p. 59, 60,) that Josephus out of a partial fondness for Herod Agrippa, whom he had so much extolled, has concealed this particular, which was the true cause of those excruciating pains in the bowels, of which this Herod, and his grandfather Herod the Great died. See Joseph. Antig. lib. xvii. cap. 6, [al. 8,] § 3.

*c The word of God grew and was multiplied.* The expressions here used, μονεται καὶ επεκτείνεται relate properly to vegetables, and may be intended to signify, that the growth of the gospel, that is, its prevalence in the minds and lives of some, was (as it were) the means of sowing that divine seed in the hearts of many more.
IMPROVEMENT.

THE wrath of a king is as the messengers of death; but a wise man (says Solomon) will pacify it: (Prov. xvi. 14.) The world generally teaches this wisdom to its votaries, and the ties of interest are felt, when those of affection have but little force. Tyre and Sidon were nourished by the king's country, and therefore they sought peace with him: But how much more necessary is it, for all countries, and people, and princes to seek peace with the God of heaven, by whom the earth and all its inhabitants are nourished, who giveth rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, and can by his sovereign word turn the heavens into brass, and the earth into iron. (Deut. xxviii. 23.)

How vain and impious was the applause of this servile multitude, when they were so ready to compliment a mortal man in shining apparel, and on a royal throne, with the title of divinity! and how wretched the infatuation of his mind, when he could receive that ascription without horror, yea even with complacency! Thus do pomp and power, wealth and grandeur, take away the heart of their possessors; but never is a mortal nearer to destruction than when he forgets that he is a mortal.

With pleasure no doubt, did this angel of the Lord come down to execute upon this proud and persecuting prince the vengeance due to the honours of God which he had invaded, and the blood of the saints which he had spilt. Let us adore the triumph of the injured majesty of heaven: He was smitten with death, with a death equally tormenting and ignominious; vermin devoured this god, nor could all his robes, his guards, or his physicians, preserve his living body from being as easy a prey to them as the carcase of the meanest slave.

Thus is the Almighty Sovereign of the universe known by the judgment which he executeth upon the haughty kings of the earth. (Psal. ix. 16.) Well might the gospel flourish on occasion of such an event; when this royal corpse was (as it were) given for manure to the roots of that vine which he, in contempt of the King of Kings by whom it was planted, had impiously endeavoured to root up.
SECT. XXVIII.

Paul and Barnabas, being returned from Jerusalem to Antioch, are sent out from thence to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles; and, coming to Cyprus, smite Elymas with blindness, and convert Sergius Paulus the Roman governor there. Acts XII. ult. XIII. 1—12.

Acts XII. 25.

AND Barnabas and Saul, returned from Jerusalem, when they had fulfilled their ministry, and took with them John, whose surname was Mark.

Now

Having fulfilled their ministry, returned from Jerusalem. Mr. Fleming thinks with several other good critics, that they returned after the death of James, and in the interval between the commitment and deliverance of Peter; and that it was to avoid breaking the thread of the story, that their return was not mentioned sooner. (See Flem. Christol. Vol. I. p. 230.) But Dr. Lardner argues, from its being inserted here, that the commission was not executed till after the death of Herod, and dates the beginning of the famine accordingly. (Credib. Book I. chap. ii. § 2. Vol. I. p. 541.) Lord Barrington thinks, it was during Paul's abode at Jerusalem on this occasion, that he had the vision in the temple mentioned Acts xxii. 17—21; and that then the Lord Jesus gave him that commission to the Gentiles expressed Acts xxvi. 17, 18; which would be supposed to have been spoken at this time, and that this extraordinary fact is referred to Acts xiii. 2, when the Spirit speaks as having already called him and Barnabas to the work, to which they were then to be separated; which must suppose, that Barnabas had also some correspondent vision, or was mentioned in that of Paul. (See Miscell. Sacr. Essay ii. p. 26, 27.) But I shall give my reasons, when I come to the text in question; why I understand them in a different sense and connection.

John, whose surname was Mark.] It appears from what Grotius has urged, (Proleg. ad Marc Evang.) that this was a different person from Mark the Evangelist, who was for several years the intimate companion of the apostle Peter, and seems to have been converted by him, as he calls him his son; (1 Pet. v. 13.) a title which the apostles used to give to those who were the fruit of their ministry.— (Compare 1 Cor. iv. 15. Gal. iv. 19. and Phil. ver. 10.) We learn from Scripture, that this person was the son of Mary, at whose house the disciples met, to pray for Peter, when he was imprisoned; (Acts xii. 12.) and he is spoken of as sister's son to Barnabas, (Col. iv. 10.) who appears to have had a great affection for him, not only by his taking him with them to Antioch, and from thence to Pamphylia, (Acts xiii. 5, &c.) where it should seem he was discouraged by the difficulties of the work from going any farther, and returned to Jerusalem, (ver. 13.) but by his insisting afterwards, when they were setting out upon another progress, that Mark should go with them to visit the churches, which Paul was so averse to, that they parted; and Paul chose Silas to attend him, while Barnabas took Mark, and sailed for Cyprus.— (Acts xv. 57—40.) We have no farther account of him in the Acts; but he appears so far
At Antioch there were several prophets and teachers.

Acts XIII. 1. Now there were in the church that was at Antioch, certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul.

? As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul, for the work whereunto I have called them.

3 And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.

to have retrieved his character, that he is recommended afterwards by the apostle Paul to the Colossians; (Col. iv. 10.) and, when he was at Rome, the apostle mentions him among his fellow-labourers, (Phil. vi. 24.) and at last speaks of his desire to see him, as one that was useful to him in the ministry. (2 Tim. iv. 11.)

Of these might be the stated pastors of the place, and who only occasional residents there, we cannot think with any certainty determine, only that Paul and Barnabas were of the latter.—Mr. Fleming, on the supposition mentioned in note *, concludes that this assembly might be held with some particular regard to Peter's danger, and that in the Spirit directed, that both Paul and Barnabas should be received into the new diminished number of the apostles. See Phil. iv. 19.

* Certain prophets, and teachers] Who of these might be the stated pastors of the place, and who only occasional residents there, we cannot think with any certainty determine, only that Paul and Barnabas were of the latter.—Mr. Fleming, on the supposition mentioned in note *, concludes that this assembly might be held with some particular regard to Peter's danger, and that in the Spirit directed, that both Paul and Barnabas should be received into the new diminished number of the apostles. See Phil. iv. 19.

For the work to which I have called them.] If there be any reference to a past fact in these words, it is probably to some revelation personally made to Paul and Barnabas, to signify that they should take a journey into several countries of Asia Minor to preach the gospel there. But that they were now invested with the apostolic office by these inferior ministers, (though expressly asserted by Clarinus and many others,) is a thing neither credible in itself, nor consistent with what Paul himself says, Gal. i. 1. And that they now received a power, before unknown in the church, of preaching to the idola rurs Gentiles, is inconsistent with Acts xi. 20, 21, and upon many other considerations, to be proposed elsewhere, appears to me absolutely incredible.
They therefore being thus sent out by the immediate direction of the Holy Spirit, and animated to a noble elevation of soul in the thought of such an important mission, departed to Seleucia, a considerable port in the Mediterranean sea; and from thence they sailed to the island of Cyprus; so celebrated, or rather so infamous, for the worship of Venus, who was supposed to hold her peculiar residence here, and therefore was commonly called 'the Cyprian Goddess.' And being arrived at Salamis, the eastern port of the island, and consequently that which lay nearest to the place from whence they came, they preached the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews there; for there were great numbers of that people in Cyprus: And they had also John for their attendant, who waited upon them with great respect, not pretending to a character equal to theirs.

And having traversed the whole island, as far as Paphos, which lay on its western coast, they found there a certain Jew, who was a magician [and] false prophet, whose name was Bar-Jesus, or the son of one Jesus or Joshua: This was a person who was much regarded, and was at that time with the Roman proconsul there, Sergius Paulus, a prudent man, of a steady conduct and thoughtful temper, ready to inquire after truth, and capable to judge of its evidence; who having received some general intelligence of their character and messages, sent some of those that were about him, and calling for Barnabas and Saul, desired to hear the word of God, that he might know what was the purport of their preachings, and what regard was due to the doctrine they

4 So they being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed unto Seleucia; and from thence they sailed to Cyprus.

5 And when they were at Salamis, they preached the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews: and they had also John to their minister.

6 And when they had gone through the isle unto Paphos, they found a certain sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew, whose name was Barjesus:

7 Which was with the deputy of the country Sergius Paulus, a prudent man; who called for Barnabas and Saul, and desired to hear the word of God.

6 By the Holy Spirit.] This seems to be added to remind us, that, though they were solemnly recommended to God by the prayers of their brethren, their authority was not derived from them, but from the Holy Spirit himself.

8 A magician and false prophet.] There were many instances of real or pretended sorcery among the Jews in these days, which seems to have been designed by the devil and wicked men, to stifle the miracles of Christ and his apostles. But, by confounding them in several instances, the Christian cause was magnified yet more, than it would otherwise have been. Nevertheless it is to be feared, they wrought on many who were not wise and candid enough to examine, so as to introduce a general contempt of all pretences to supernatural powers as false or inconclusive: a sad instance of which we have even in Marcus Antoninus, who, though he professes some resolution to have been made to himself in dreams, (De Renibus suis, lib. 1. § 17,) yet reckons it among the great advantages he received by conversing with Diogenetus, that he learnt from him to despise all stories of miracles and dispositions, ibid § 6.
Coming to Cyprus they are opposed by Elymas the sorcerer

8 But Elymas the sorcerer (for so is his name by interpretation) withstood them, seeking to turn away the deputy from the faith.

9 Then Saul, (who also is called Paul,) filled with the Holy Ghost, set his eyes on him:

10 And said, O full of all subtlety and all mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?

b That was his name when translated, &c.] The most probable etymology I have found of it is that, which derives it from the Arabic word Alam, which signifies one acquainted with hidden secrets, from the Hebrew ילפ, alam, to hide, and is used in the Arabic version of the Old Testament, for the Hebrew ילפ, a magician. See Been in loc.

1 The proconsul.] So the word πρωτοκοστήριον properly signifies; and, though Beza and Dr. Hammond, as well as Grotius and Mr. L’Enfant, (who has taken almost all his notes from him,) say that the title was improperly applied to the governor of Cyprus, as they suppose, by way of compliment, while he was only πρωτοκοστήριον, a sort of lieutenant; Dr. Larduer has with great learning vindicated the accuracy with which St. Luke speaks, (Credib. Book I. chap. i. § 11. Vol. I. p. 51—54,) and shewn, from Dio, lib. iii. p. 504. & lib. iv. p. 525. B. that they who presided over the Roman provinces by the appointment of the senate, (and Cyprus was now of that number, though it had once been praetorium,) were called procensors though they had never filled the consular chair; which (as appears by the Fasti Consulares,) was the case with the excellent and happy governor of whom we speak. See Mr. Riseve at Boyle’s Lect. chap. iii. § 1 p. 55, 56.

k Saul, who is also called Paul.] Some have thought the apostle had originally two names, and many others that he changed the former for the latter with design, either out of deference to Sergius Paulus, or to the Gentiles, among whom he now preached, so much as to be called by way of eminence, (though not in strict approbation,) their apostle. (See Dr. Hammond in loc.) But I think Beza’s account of the matter most easy and probable; that having conversed hitherto chiefly with Jews and Syrians, to whom the name of Saul was familiar, and now coming among Romans and Greeks, they would naturally pronounce his name Paul; as one, whose Hebrew name was Jochanan, would be called by the Greeks and Latins John, by the French Jean, by the Dutch Hans, and by the English John. (See also Grot. in loc.) Beza thinks, the family of this proconsul might be the first, who addressed or spoke of him by the name Paul.
pleasure. And behold, even now the almighty hand of the Lord Jesus Christ, whose gospel thou opposest, is upon thee, and thou shalt be struck blind by it, and shalt not be able to see even the sun itself at noon day for a certain time, that thou mayest be convinced of thy sin and folly, and mayest, if possible, be brought to repentance for it. And immediately, while Paul was yet speaking a thick mist and darkness fell upon him: and going about in the utmost confusion, he sought some to lead him by the hand, not being able so much as to find the door without a guide, and afraid that he might run upon any one who stood in his way.

Then the proconsul, seeing what was done, yielded to so convincing an evidence, and believed the gospel; being also struck with admiration of the internal evidence which he soon discovered in the doctrine of the Lord; and which broke in with increasing lustre on his mind, in proportion to the degree of attention with which he inquired into it.

IMPROVEMENT.

2 We who were once sinners of the Gentiles, and now by the divine goodness are brought to the knowledge of the gospel, have abundant reason to be thankful that inspired messengers were sent to teach it, being separated to that purpose by the direct appointment of the Holy Spirit. May they that go out to this sacred work in all nations, and in all times, maintain a becoming regard to his influences; and may he make their way prosperous! That he may be engaged to do so, it is certainly convenient, upon the justest principles of reason and piety, to send them forth with solemn prayer; in which ministers and private Christians should from time to time concur, with an intenseness and seriousness answerable to the occasion.

Wherever

1 The proconsul believed.] I can see no reason at all to imagine, with Lord Barrington, (Abstract, p. 21) and Dr. Benson, (Vol. II. p. 27) that Sergius Paulus was the first convert to Christianity among the idolatrous Gentiles, which, if their own interpretation of Acts xi. 19, 20, (unsatisfactory as it seems,) were to be allowed, would appear incredible from this very context; for who can imagine, that Paul and Barnabas should, as we are assured they did, traverse the whole Island of Cyprus, from Salamis to Paphos, without converting one person from idolatry, though it is here incontroverted, that they bore an unlimited commission, and fully understood its extent.—Limborch justly argues in favour of Christian masquerade from hence, as it is neither credible, that, if Sergius Paulus abdicated his office, so important a circumstance should be omitted, or that Paul should have acquiesced in his continuing in it, if he knew it contrary to the will of Christ, which he would not fail fully to declare to him. See Limb. Theolog. lib. v. cap. 73, § 3.
Wherever the messengers of the gospel go, they must not be 

surprised if Satan raise up his instruments and children to oppose 

them; especially where they would endeavour to introduce reli-

gion into the hearts of princes, or other great men. Well does 6, 8 

the prince of the power of the air know; how dangerous every such 

blow is to his kingdom. Nevertheless, the King of Kings, knows 

how to make way to the hearts of the greatest among the children 

of men; nor can any of them shew a more solid and important 

prudence, than to inquire impartially into the evidences of the gos-

pel, and to give themselves up to be governed by it; an happy 

resolution, which they will probably be disposed to form, in pro-

portion to the degree in which they observe its nature and tenden-

cy: For surely every intelligent person that does so, must like 

12 

Sergius Paulus, be struck with the doctrine of the Lord, as well as 

with the miracles which were wrought to confirm it. 

Justly might Paul pronounce that man, who endeavoured to ob-

struct the progress of divine truth in the world, a child of Satan, 

and an enemy of all righteousness: Justly might God, who knew all 

his secret wickedness and perverseness of soul, smite him with a 

blindness, which, while it rendered him incapable of seeing the 

light of the meridian sun, seemed but a doleful emblem of that 

more fatal darkness which, through the corruption of his heart, had 

spread itself over his mind, and prevented the light of the gospel 

of Christ, who is the image of God, from shining upon it. (2 Cor. 

iv. 4.) Have we not reason to fear, that God may in his righteous 

judgment punish that iniquity of Spirit, with which many now rise 

up against the right ways of the Lord, (not ceasing to pervert and 

disguise them, that they may more plausibly and effectually oppose 

them, with an internal blindness, in which they may wander on 
to their destruction? And if others stupidly permit themselves 

to be guided by them, what can be expected but that the blind 

leading the blind, both leaders and followers should fall into the pit? 

(Mat. xv. 14.)

SECT. XXIX.

Paul and Barnabas come to Antioch in Pisidia, where the former 
delivers a remarkable discourse in the Jewish synagogue. Acts 

XIII. 13—42.


NOW when Paul and his company loos-

ed from Paphos, they 
came to Perga in Pam-

phylia


THE reader was informed, in the last section 
of the success with which Paul and Barna-

bas preached the gospel in Cyprus; where Ser-

gius Paulus, the Roman proconsul, was con-

verted
Paul and Barnabas come to Antioch in Pisidia.

Acts xiii. 14. Nevertheless they remained inflexible in their resolution of prosecuting the important work in which they were engaged; and therefore going on from Perga, they came to Antioch, a considerable city in the district of Pisidia, which lay north of Pamphylia, and consequently farther from the sea: And entering into the Jewish synagogue on the sabbath-day, they sat down among those that were worshipping there. And after the customary reading of the proper section for the day out of the law, and another out of the prophets, the rulers of the synagogue, knowing in general the public character which the two celebrated strangers sustained, and being curious to hear from their own mouth that new doctrine which had made so much noise in other places, sent one of the inferior officers to them, saying,

*Antioch in Pisidia.] The situation of this place is thus described, to intimate how carefully it should be distinguished from Antioch in Syria, so much more frequently mentioned in this history.

*Entering into the synagogue, they sat down.] The professed followers of Jesus were excommunicated, at least on conviction, by an act of the Sanhedrim made before the crucifixion of our Lord; (compare John ix. 22; and xii. 43;) and it is what he had foretold to his apostles, that they should be so treated. (John xvi. 2.) Yet Paul and Barnabas, enter the synagogue without opposition, and meet with a regard which no one can imagine the Jews would shew to excommunicated persons. Learned men have accounted for this by saying that elders and doctors among the Jews, (such as Paul and Barnabas are supposed to have been,) though sometimes scourged in the synagogues, were not cast out of them.

*The rulers of the synagogue sent to them.] It is, I think, a very fruitless attempt, which some learned men have made, to ascertain the conditions on which persons were admitted to teach in the Jewish synagogues; and to settle the forms with which they
Then Paul stood up, and beckoning with his hand, said, Men of Israel, and ye that fear God, give audience:

The God of this people of Israel chose our fathers, and exalted the people when they dwelt as strangers in the land of Egypt, and with an high arm brought he them out of it.

saying Men, [and] brethren, if you have any word of exhortation to the people, or any declaration to make which may conduce to the edification of the assembly, speak [it] freely, as this is the proper season of doing it.

Then Paul stood up, and waving his hand, to render the audience more attentive, said, Ye men of Israel, and all ye that fear God and are met together with devout hearts to worship him this day, hearken, I beseech you, with patient attention, for I shall mention several facts which well deserve your serious regard. The God of this peculiar people, for such I well know the seed of Israel to be, graciously chose our pious and venerable fathers Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob to be the objects of his special favour, and for their sakes was pleased to promise most important blessings to their offspring: Accordingly he took them under his protection from their first beginning, and raised the people from that prostrate and dejected state in which they were while sojourning in the land of Egypt, under the tyranny of Pharaoh; and to deliver them from that inhospitable and oppressive country, he led them out of it with an uplifted and extended arm, having displayed his power in a variety of most astonishing miracles, by which he
Paul recounts the favours of God to Israel.

...he pleaded their injured cause: And then for the space of about forty years, he endured their perverse and ungrateful behaviour in the wilderness, carrying them (as it were) through a course of education there, to form them in those retired circumstances to a habit of observing that admirable system of laws which he there thought fit to give them. At length he put a period to that pilgrimage, in which, nevertheless, they had been sustained by so many miraculous tokens of his care; and having cast out seven mighty nations, who were before settled in the land of Canaan, and had erected more than thirty kingdoms there, defended by fortifications of great strength as well as by numerous forces both of horse and foot, he distributed their whole country to them for an inheritance, and supported them in it for many generations.

And, to omit many remarkable circumstances in this period of their history, after these transactions [which lasted] about four hundred and fifty years, that is, after the choice of our fathers,

18 And about the time of forty years suffered he their manners in the wilderness.

19 And when he had destroyed seven nations in the land of Canaan, he divided their land to them by lot.

20 And after that, he gave unto them judges, about the space of
of four hundred and fifty years, until Samuel the prophet.

fathers, and the birth of Isaac, in which the promises to Abraham began to be accomplished, He gave [them] a series of judges; by whose heroic interposition he delivered them from those repeated oppressions and miseries which their frequent revolts to idolatry had brought upon them. And this continued, with some intervals, till the time of Samuel the Prophet, who was the last of these extraordinary leaders and magistrates.

And from that time, too fond of being like their neighbours in that respect, they desired a king, (1 Sam. viii. 5.) insensible of the favour which God had done them in assuming the character and relation of a king to them: And God gave them, first, Saul the Son of Kish, a man of the tribe of Benjamin; and his government with that of Samuel the prophet lasted for the term of forty years. And having in his righ-

1 For the term of forty years.] It is the opinion of Beza, Grotius, Calvin, Brennius, Woltzogenius, Limborch, (Amic. Collat. cap. 26.) and several other consider-able critics, that the forty years, here spoken of do not all belong to the reign of Saul, but include at least a considerable part of Samuel's government. Dr. Benson has also more lately declared himself on the same side of the question; (Hist. of Christianity, Vol. II. p. 31,) and Messieurs L'Enfant and Beausobre gives us the same interpretation. But the learned Mr. Bisceo has advanced so much in favour of the supposition, that the reign of Saul continued all these forty years, (Sermon at Boyle's Lect. chap. xvii. p. 612—616,) which Mr. Bedford also maintains in his chronology, that I think it incumbent upon me to give some better reason, than merely the authority of the greatest names, for paraphrasing the clause as I have done, especially as most of the authors mentioned above have only given their opinion, and none of them has entered fully into the question. The chief consideration which determined me is this: Samuel is expressly said to have judged Israel all the days of his life; (2 Sam. vii. 15,) but we are sure, that he lived the greater part, (probably by far the greater part,) of the forty years preceding Saul's death; for David was but thirty years old, when he began to reign over Judah, (2 Sam. v. 4,) which was not till after Saul was slain; and Samuel did not, till after Saul's death for David was but thirty years old, when he began to reign over Judah, (2 Sam. v. 4,) which was not till after Saul was slain; and Samuel did not, till after Saul's death, anoint him. (at which time we cannot suppose David to have been less than fifteen years old,) but lived a considerable time after, that is, till about the time of David's going to Paran; (1 Sam. xxv. 1,) which seems to have been but a little before his sojournings in the country of the Philistines, where he dwelt only a year and four months before the battle of Gilboa, in which Saul fell; (1 Sam. xxvii. 7.) a circumstance that greatly favours the opinion, which (as Drusius observes,) so commonly prevailed among the Jews, that Saul survived Samuel but little more than two years. I am indeed far from thinking that Saul's reign is to be reckoned only from Samuel's death: the contrary is most apparent; and Mr. Bisceo has abundantly proved, that the actions assigned to him must have taken up many years. But of the forty in question, it may well suffice to allow twenty to him from his anointing, and the former twenty (computed from the grand action at Mizpeh,) to Samuel, who might in that time be past his prime, and to be inclined to associate his sons with him, till on their miscarriages the people took occasion to demand a king, who at first, we are sure from the story, lived privately, and whose authority was never so great as to swallow up that of so illustrious a prophet and judge.—I know, the authority of Josaphus is urged in defence of the scheme I oppose; for he says, according to our present copies, that Saul reigned "eighteen years during Samuel's life," which I think very probable, "and two and twenty after his death." (Jos. Ph. Antiq. vi. cap. 14. [al. 15.] § 9.) But this is utterly incredible; for David then could not be eight years old, when Samuel anointed him, which (as was said before) was some considerable time before the prophet died; and it may therefore be assu-
God raised up David to be their king.

sect. xlix.

Acts xiii. 22.

teous displeasure rejected Saul, and removed him from reigning over Israel, for his rebellion against the divine command in the business of Amalek, and for other crimes of aggravated guilt, (1 Sam. xv. 23. and 1 Chron. x. 13.) He afterwards raised up to them David for a king, the person so justly celebrated in all succeeding ages; to whom also he gave a more glorious testimony in his word, (1 Sam. xiii. 14. and Psal. lxxxix. 20,) and said, "I have found my servant David the Son of Jesse, a man according to mine own heart, who will not disregard my voice as Saul has done, but shall do all my will, and rule my people with integrity."

23 From him, it was declared, that the Messiah should descend, and by a special covenant he was assured, that his throne should be established to all generations. (Psal. lxxxix. 3, 4.) Now therefore of this holy man's seed, according to the tenor of that frequently repeated promise, (Isai. ix. 6, 7. xi. 1. Jer. xxiii. 5, 6) God hath raised up unto Israel Jesus, the great and illustrious Saviour, so long foretold in the sacred oracles, whom I am this day come to preach among you.

24 This is the person God hath so often promised he would send into the world, and he appeared just in the time, and with the circumstances, which those divine prophecies had pointed out; John the Baptist having been sent before as his herald, and having preached in a very convincing manner, to introduce his appearance, the baptism of repentance unto all the people of Israel; even that baptism which, in token of their repentance,

shews, that in many places where they render it ἁπνοία; (as indeed they frequently do,) it only signifies a person in the full vigour of his constitution. It seems by no means probable, that God should choose a stripling for the first king of Israel; and I think what is said of the age of Ishbosheth, compared with the passages mentioned above plainly shews, that Saul was then in his prime, (perhaps about thirty-five,) and justifies the prudence of Paganus, Montanus, Munster, and the Vulgate, who render it elatus, a choice person, without determining any thing concerning his youth, in which they also agree with the Syriac and Arabic Versions.

k John having before preached, &c.] He mentions the preaching of John the Baptist in this incidental manner, as a thing already known to them, because it gave so universal an alarm to the whole Jewish nations.
25 And as John fulfilled his course, he said, Whom think ye that I am? I am not he. But, behold, there cometh one after me, whose shoes of his feet I am not worthy to loose.

26 Men and brethren, children of the stock of Abraham, and whatsoever among you fear God, to you is the word of this salvation sent.

27 For they that dwelt at Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they knew him not, nor yet the voices of the prophets which are read every sabbath-day, they have fulfilled them in condemning him.

28 And though they found no cause of death in him, yet desired they Pilate that he should be slain.

29 And when they had fulfilled all that was written of him, they took him down from the nation, that it might probably be heard of in foreign countries, at least as remote as Pisidia.

1 Whom do you imagine me to be? I am not he.] Raphelius has taken pains to prove from some similar passages in the Greek classics that both these clauses may be considered as united in an affirmation, and rendered, "I am not the person whom you suppose me to be;" that is, the Messiah. Ann. vol. ii. Herod, p. 251, 252.

VOL. III.
God raised him from the dead.

from the cross, on which he had expired in the midst of ignominy and torture, they permitted his friends to bury him, and laid him in a tomb. And there they took the utmost care to guard him; but God raised him up from the dead on the third day, according to his own repeated prediction, which they had heard from him before, but were unable to obstruct and hinder its accomplishment. And after he was risen from the dead, he appeared for several days to those that came up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem a little before his death; who most of them continue to this day, and are his witnesses to the people of the Jews, among whom they still reside, and where any of you who go up to Jerusalem may hear it from their own mouth. And we, who are sent out by him on the same errand, and furnished with all proper credentials for that purpose, do now bring you these good tidings, that the very promise which was made to the fathers, and which was the hope and joy of their posterity through so many succeeding ages. God hath now accomplished to us their children, in raising up Jesus from the dead. And it is manifest, that by his resurrection he has declared him, in the most convincing manner, to be indeed his Son; so that it was, as I may speak, the birth-day of his reign, as it is also written in the seventh verse of the second Psalm, “Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.” And agreeable to this, because he hath raised him from the dead, no more to return to the grave, the seat of corruption,

He was far from being ashamed to mention the most ignominious parts of his Master’s sufferings to those who were strangers to the gospel; knowing how sufficiently he answered all that could be objected from thence by what he added and testified concerning his resurrection. In the second Psalm. A few copies read it, (as Jerome Augustine also did,) the first; but they are overborne by such superior authority, that I am surprised they should have been followed by any, who did not affect to vary from the received readings as much as possible. It seems evident from hence, that the Psalms were then placed in the same order as now; and it is observable, that this is the only quotation of the Old Testament so circumstantially made in the New. Reza conjectures, that neither first nor second was mentioned in the original copy.

30 But God raised him from the dead:

31 And he was seen many days of them which came up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are his witnesses unto the people.

32 And we declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers,

33 God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second Psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee. And as concerning that he raised him up from the dead, now no more to return to corruption, he said on this

He was far from being ashamed to mention the most ignominious parts of his Master’s sufferings to those who were strangers to the gospel; knowing how sufficiently he answered all that could be objected from thence by what he added and testified concerning his resurrection. In the second Psalm. A few copies read it, (as Jerome Augustine also did,) the first; but they are overborne by such superior authority, that I am surprised they should have been followed by any, who did not affect to vary from the received readings as much as possible. It seems evident from hence, that the Psalms were then placed in the same order as now; and it is observable, that this is the only quotation of the Old Testament so circumstantially made in the New. Reza conjectures, that neither first nor second was mentioned in the original copy.

ο This day have I begotten thee.] Bishop Pearson, (on the Creed, p. 252.) well observes, that it is with peculiar propriety and beauty that God is said to have begotten Christ on the day of his resurrection, as he seemed then to be born out of the earth anew. (Compare Rom. i. 4. Heb. i. 6. and Rev. i. 5.) Mr. L’Enfant says, that the anointing day of kings is sometimes called their birth-day, for which Heinsius has produced some authorities, Exerc. Sacra, in Mat. xiv. 6. Compare note i on Mark vi. 21. Vol. I. p. 406. The grave, the seat of corruption. Reza here observes with his usual accuracy, that, as Christ never saw corruption, at all, the Greek διαφημος [corruptus] must signify the grave, as θανατω in Hebrew also does: (compare Psal. xxiv. 15. evii. 20. and Lam. iv. 20.) just as the coffin of a man raised from the dead, as soon as he
this wise, I will give you the sure mercies of David.

35 Wherefore he saith also in another Psalm, Thou shalt not suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.

36 For David after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on sleep and was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption.

37 But he whom God raised again, saw no corruption.

38 Be it known therefore unto you, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins:

39 And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.

He hath said thus by the prophet, (Isa. lv. 3.)

"I will give you the sure mercies of David, that is, mercies which, by the resurrection of him whom I have now set upon the throne of David, are made sure to you, and shall prove eternal, as his life and reign." Wherefore also in another, and that a very remarkable [place] he saith, (Psal. xvi. 10.) Thou wilt not permit thine Holy One to see corruption." Now it is evident this must refer, not to the inspired writer himself, but to some other person; for David, by whom this psalm was written, having faithfully served his own generation of men, according to the will of God, fell asleep, that is, died, and was gathered to his fathers, and being laid among the dead of former ages, saw corruption, just in the same manner as other human bodies do, when the soul is separated from them. But he of whom these words were spoken, and whom as I have just been telling you, God raised up from the dead, did not continue in the grave so long as to see corruption, being laid there on the evening before the sabbath, and raised early in the morning after it. Be it known therefore unto you, men [and] brethren, that by him, even this glorious and exalted person, the remission of sins is preached unto you, even the full and assured pardon of all your offences, be they ever so great, and ever so aggravated. And by him every one who believeth in him is, immediately in consequence of that faith, freely and fully justified and acquitted before God, not only from the guilt of smaller miscarriages, but even from the guilt of all those things which are in the highest degree criminal, and from which ye could not on any consideration whatever be justified.
tified by the law of Moses'; but which expressly were pronounced by that to be capital offences, for which the criminal was immediately doomed on conviction to die without mercy, so that no room was left for any sacrifice of atonement.

40 This is the substance of the message with which I am charged: See to it therefore, I beseech you, as ye value your own souls, that what is spoken in the prophets, as the fatal consequence of rejecting it, may not come upon you: For they speak in very awful language to such; Isaiah for instance, when he says, (chap. xxviii. 14.) "Behold ye despisers, ye scornful men that look with haughtiness contempt on that corner stone which I lay in Zion, the judgment I will execute upon you is so terrible, that it shall be a vexation only to understand the report:" And in like manner to the prophet Habakkuk, when he says, (chap. i. 5.) Behold ye, and regard, and wonder marvellously, turn pale with terror, and disappear; as those that shall perish at once, and vanish (as it were) out of sight, consumed in a moment by the fierceness of my vengeance: "For I perform a most amazing work in your days, even a work which ye shall not believe, if any one tell it you." And the destruction God will bring upon you, if you reject the gospel, would appear far more incredible to you should it be described in all its terrors, than the desolation that was formerly threatened; which nevertheless, as your unbelieving fathers found to their cost, was circumstantially executed upon them.

By the law of Moses.] That law appointed sin-offerings to expiate smaller offences, so far as that the offender who offered them should be free from all further prosecution on account of them. But this very view of them shews, how absolutely necessary to the being of society it was, that they should not be admitted in cases of murder, adultery, &c. These crimes therefore were made capital; nor was the dying criminal, however penitent, allowed to offer them, which would have been quite inconsistent with the temporal pardon connected with them. But the expiatory sacrifice of Christ takes away the guilt of all sin; and, though it by no means affects the manner in which offenders would stand in human courts, (which the Mosaic sacrifices did,) it delivers from the condemnation of God in the invisible world; with respect to which the others could have no efficacy at all, as it was a very supposable case, that an impenitent sinner might present them in all their exactest forms. Compare Rom. viii. 3. Gal. ii. 16. and Heb. x. 4.) See Mr. Hallet, Vol. II. Disc. 3. p. 262, & seq.

Turn pale with terror, and disappear.] There is an ambiguity in the word ἀπαλεῖγον, which may be rendered either of these ways; and as both these senses are constant, and would probably concur, both are inserted in the paraphrase, though as I think, the latter more expressive. I have marked that as preferable. The attentive reader, who understands the original, will see, that I have often took this method.

Address
This was the substance of Paul's plain and serious address to the Jews, in their synagogue at Antioch in Pisidia, to which they replied nothing at present. But while the Jews were going out of the synagogue, the Gentiles, who out of curiosity were many of them assembled there, on the fame of the arrival of such celebrated men, earnestly desired that these words might be spoken to them again the following sabbath; when they promised to attend themselves, and to bring as many of their friends as they could: And thus the assembly broke up for that time.

**Improvement.**

That the scriptures have been publicly read in Jewish and Christian assemblies, from the primitive times, is a noble evidence of their genuine authority, which it will be our undoubted wisdom to transmit to those who are to arise after us: From them, succeeding generations will be fully informed of that edifying story which the apostle here briefly recounts; of the deliverance of Israel from Egypt, and their settlement in the land of Canaan, according to the promise of God to their fathers; and will also learn the ungrateful returns which they made to the Divine Goodness, when they rejected the Lord from being king over them. (1 Sam. viii. 7.)

The character of David, as a man after God's own heart, who would fulfill all his pleasure, is surely worthy of being emulated by every

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1 Address to the Jews.] How impertinent Mr. Collins urges this as an instance of the apostle's arguing with the Gentiles from allegorical interpretations of prophecies, must be evident to every attentive reader on various accounts: for these Scriptures are not allegorically applied, nor are they addressed chiefly to the Gentiles, but to Jews by birth or proselytism. (Comp. ver. 16, and 46.) Several Gentiles were indeed present, who probably came out of curiosity, drawn by the fame of such celebrated preachers; and some of them might drop in, while he was speaking: And, as in the series of his discourse, they heard of an extraordinary person, by whom all that believed in him might obtain pardon and happiness, they were desirous of having that doctrine farther explained to them; and, upon a promise that it should be done, took care to engage a vast auditory against the next sabbath, as we shall presently see.

2 While the Jews were going out of the synagogue.] To render εἰκάζειν &c. in τήν συναγωγὴν τῶν Ἰουδαίων, when Paul and Barnabas were gone out of the Jewish synagogue, is both supposing the inspired historian to have made an unnecessary distinction with relation to a synagogue which appeared before to belong to the Jews, and making him to have expressed himself in an ungrammatical manner: nor, on the other hand, can we well suppose, that Paul and the Gentiles stayed in the synagogue, when all the Jews had quitted it. I therefore render it, while they were going out.

44 The following sabbath.] Some interpret ἔτος τοῦ μηνιανου διακόνου of a day between the two sabbaths as there is a tradition among the Jews, mentioned by Dr. Lightfoot and others, that Ezra commanded them to assemble on the second and fifth days of the week, (our Mondays and Thursdays,) for the study of the law in their synagogues. But I think, that verse 44 determines the expression to the sense our version gives it. And Lud Capellus has shown, that it is not an unexampled manner of speaking.
Acts xxiv. 36. every Christian: In this respect, may he who is feeble among the Lord’s people, be like David! (Zech. xii. 8.) Like him may we all be solicitous to serve our generation according to the will of God; to do all the good we can in the age and station in which Providence has fixed us, though it be in a crooked and perverse generation: gradually striving to mend it as fast as we can, and waiting our summons to fall asleep as we quickly must, and be gathered to our fathers! Were we the greatest princes upon earth, we, like David, must see corruption in the grave: But let us rejoice to think, that Jesus, whom God raised up according to his promise, saw no corruption; and if we are his people, he will ransom and redeem us from it. (Hos. xiii. 14.)

He, though so outrageously and infamously treated by the Jews, was nevertheless in the most convincing manner declared to be the Son of God, his only begotten Son: Such a resurrection proclaimed him to be so; (Rom. i. 4.) and, in consequence of it, the sure mercies of David are now given us by him; and the plenary remission of all the most aggravated transgressions is through him proclaimed: For ever adored be his glorious name! Most thankfully accepted be his overflowing grace! which frees us from the guilt of those offences which the law of Moses condemned without mercy, and takes out the day of scarlet and crimson sins!

Let us take heed lest, if we despise so great a salvation, we meet with an astonishing vengeance; the justice of which will be attested and applauded by the messengers of God to the Jewish and the Christian church: All the prophets and John the Baptist superior to them all, who bore witness to Christ, and all the apostles and succeeding ministers in every age, have concurred to admonish us of our danger; and they will another day rise up together in judgment against us, if all these admonitions are given in vain.

SECT. XXX.

The Gentiles at Antioch in Pisidia, accept the gospel, which the Jews reject, and raise a persecution against the apostles, who therefore go to Iconium. Acts XIII. 43, to the end.

Acts XIII. 43. A Large account was given in the preceding section to the discourse which Paul had addressed to the Jews, in their synagogue at Antioch in Pisidia; and the effect of it was, that when the synagogue was broken up, many of the Jews and of the devout proselytes, who, though not of the stock of Israel, had embraced the

Acts XIII. 43. Now when the congregation was broken up, many of the Jews, and religious proselytes followed Paul.
Paul and Barnabas; who speaking to them, persuaded them to continue in the grace of God.

The Jewish religion, followed Paul and Barnabas, professing their relief of the doctrine they taught; who gave them further exhortations to confirm in the faith, and speaking to them with great earnestness, persuaded them to continue in the grace of God, which they had received, and to retain that gospel which they had now embraced.

And on the following sabbath, almost the whole city was gathered together to hear the word of God, in consequence of the report which the Gentiles had spread abroad, of what had been delivered before, which awakened in many others an earnest desire of attending to that repetition of their extraordinary message, which the apostles had engaged themselves to make.

But the Jews, who continued strongly prejudiced against the message which had been delivered to them, seeing the Gentiles assembled in such great multitudes, were filled with zeal for the honour of their law and nation, which they foolishly imagined to be hurt by this new sect, and with indignation and envy at the regard which the inhabitants of Antioch shewed to it, beyond what they had ever done to the Jewish religion; and therefore they opposed the things which were spoken by Paul and Barnabas; not only contradicting them, and cavilling at their allegations, but also blaspheming and reviling these divine teachers, as impostors and seducers.

Then Paul and Barnabas, perceiving that no good impression could be made upon them were not concerned about saving appearances; but with great freedom of speech, and with a fervent zeal, tempered by wisdom, and animated by unfeigned charity, said, It was necessary, according to the general instructions of our divine Master,

a To continue in the grace of God.] The gospel is often called the grace of God, and the word of his grace, with the utmost propriety, as containing the richer display of his grace in the free pardon of our sins by Christ, and the provision he has made for our sanctification and eternal happiness. Compare Acts iv. 33, xx. 24, Rom. vi. 14, Gal. v. 3, Col. i. 6, Tit. ii. 11, 1 Pet. v. 12.

b Blaspheming and reviling, &c.] The word ἐλοιμοτίκις, in this connection with καίρως, must signify their giving them abusive language. Probably they charged them to their faces, with falsehood and villany, and represented the cause they were carrying on as most contemptible and wicked. It may seem strange, this did not prevent the conversion of the Gentiles: But they would easily see, it was the regard that Paul and Barnabas expressed for them, which had exasperated the Jews; and it is not improbable, that some miracles might have been wrought during the preceding week, which would set the character of these divine teachers above the danger of being overthrown by the malicious insinuations, or confident assertions of these furious opposers.

c Adjudge
Master, that the word of God which we are come to deliver, should first be spoken to you Jews; for, undeserving as you are of such a favour, he has directed us, that wherever we come we should open our ministry with an address to you, inviting you to faith and repentance, that you may in the first place partake of the benefits of his kingdom: Compare Luke xxiv. 47. But since you thus disdainfully thrust it away from you, and by that very action do in effect adjudge and condemn yourselves as unworthy of that eternal life and glory, which through the riches of his grace he has so freely offered to you, behold we turn ourselves to the Gentiles, and declare to them, that they are also invited into the church of the Messiah, and shall, upon their believing in him, be admitted to all the privileges of his people, as readily as if they had been descended from Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, or had been trained up in the worship of the true God, and were by circumcision entered most expressly into covenant with him. For so the Lord hath charged us to do; (Mat. xxxiii. 19. Acts i. 8.) in consequence of that prediction which was uttered by Isaiah in the name of God, (Isa. lxix. 6.) where he addresses himself to the Messiah, saying, "I have set thee for a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldst be for salvation to the remotest ends of the earth." Thither therefore will we carry his saving name, and we doubt not but they will thankfully accept that gospel which you so ungratefully despise and reject.

And the Gentiles hearing [these things,] that the way now was open for their admission into covenant with God, and they were welcome to the benefits of the Messiah's kingdom, rejoiced greatly at the happy tidings, and glorified the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles.

47 For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldst be for salvation unto the ends of the earth.

48 And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the
The Gentiles believe, and the word is spread abroad.

107 The word of the Lord, which had invited them to share in all the blessings of his grace, and brought the knowledge of salvation to them: And as many of those who were present were, through the operation of divine grace upon their hearts, in good earnest determined for eternal life, and brought to a resolution of courageously facing all opposition in the way to it, believed, and openly embraced the gospel; which others, who were remiss and unafflicted about their future and everlasting concerns, stupidly neglected, though they could find nothing solid to allude against the evidence by which it was supported. And as these new converts joined their most zealous and affectionate labours with those of Paul and Barnabas to propagate it, the word of the Lord was borne on, as with a mighty torrent, throughout all that region, which by this means was watered as with a river of salvation.

But the Jews, provoked beyond all patience at such a conduct, and at such success, stirred up [some] devout woman of considerable rank, who

49 And the word of the Lord was published throughout all the region.

50 But the Jews stirred up the devout and honourable women

"As many as were determined for eternal life, believed." I cannot think, with Sir Norton Knatchbull, that we should take πίστευσαν here to signify the same with συνήγαγον, and, placing the comma after it, render the clause, As many as were met together, (that is, all the Gentiles,) believed to [or in] eternal life, which I think neither the import nor order of the words will permit.—Much less can I allow of Mr. Jos. Mede’s interpretation, that πιστευσαν is ζυγον αναγωσαν is a periphrasis to express proselytes of the gate, (supposing the distinction of such proselytes over so well founded,) since we never meet with the phrase elsewhere as a description of them, which indeed might much better suit other proselytes, and since there is no reason to believe, that they all, and only they, were now ordained, or even that the chief number of converts was among them, when almost the whole city were gathered together.—The word πίστευσαν has various significations: It is rendered ordained only here, and Rom. xiii. 1, (where the margin, I think more properly, renders it ordered;) elsewhere it is rendered determined, Acts xv 3; addicted, 1 Cor. xvi. 15; and most frequently, appointed, Mat. xxviii. 16; Acts xxii. 10; xxvii. 23. In the Greek Classics, I think, it generally in its passive form signifies Men, who having been appointed for some military expedition, (and set in their proper offices, as we render it, (Luke vii. 8,) are drawn up in battle array for that purpose." (See Dr. Hammond’s learned note here with Le Clerc’s addition to it, and Raphelius ex Horod, p. 555—563.) So that it expresses, or refers at once to, the action of their commander in marshalling them according to the plan he has formed in his own mind, and to their own presenting themselves in their proper places, to be led on to the intended expedition. This I take to be precisely its sense here, and have therefore chosen the word determined, as having an ambiguity something like that in the original. Perhaps if one word alone were to be used for πίστευσαν in all the places where it is used, it should be ordered. The meaning of the sacred penman seems to be, that all who were deeply and seriously concerned about their eternal happiness, (whether that concern began now, or were of longer date,) openly embraced the gospel; for surely none could be said to believe, who did not make an open profession of Christianity, especially in such circumstances; and, wherever this temper was, it was undoubtedly the effect of a divine operation on their hearts, and of God’s gracious purpose thus to call them, and list them (as it were) in their proper places in his army under the great Captain of their salvation.

Dept. 

sECT. 

xxx. 

Acts 

xiii. 43.
The apostles are persecuted by the Jews, and go to Iconium.

who having been proselyted to their religion, were peculiarly zealous for it! and also applied themselves to the magistrates of the city, representing these new preachers as excitors of sedition, and innovators in religion, who might occasion danger to the state; and thus they raised a persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and drove them out of their territories with violence and infamy.

51 But they, when they were going from the boundaries of that place, shook off the dust of their feet for a testimony against them; as their Lord had commanded his apostles to do, in token of the certain ruin which should befall such despisers of his gospel: (Mark vi. 11.) And departing from thence, they came to the neighbouring city of Iconium; and there renewed the proclamation of those glad tidings, which many of the inhabitants of Antioch had so ungratefully rejected.

52 But the disciples who were left there were filled with great joy, that so blessed a message had reached their hearts; and as Paul and Barnabas had laid their hands upon them, they were furnished with an abundant communication of the gifts as well as graces of the Holy Spirit, whereby they were not only confirmed in the faith which

\[ Devout women of considerable rank. \] I am much at a loss to know, why so many learned writers interpret this of proselytes of the gate. It is quite unnatural to suppose, either that such should be called devout, rather than those that had fully embraced the Mosaic religion, or that they should be more zealous than the others, in resenting an imaginary injury done to the whole body of the Jews. But, taking them for women of figure newly proselyted to Judaism, and full of an opinion of the sanctity and privileges of the people to whom they now belonged, nothing can be more natural than to suppose, that they would instigate their husbands, and other relations, to the warmest resentment against Paul and Barnabas, whom they would look upon as levellers and apostates.

\[ Come to Iconium. \] Raphelius (ex Xcoph. p. 161—164.) has taken great pains to settle the geography of this place, and has fully proved, that it lay, not (as it is often placed) in the middle of Lycaonia, which occasions some perplexity in the following passages, but on its western borders, and just on the confines of Pisidia, Galatia, and Phrygia, to the latter of which it seems once to have belonged.

\[ Were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit. \] Hence both Lord Barrington, (Miscell. Sacra. Vol. 1, p. 105, & seq.) and Dr. Benson, (Vol. II. p. 37,) infer, that the Holy Spirit descended on these converts without the imposition of hands, and perhaps in flaming tongues. But this appears to me a mere conjecture, and indeed a very improbable one. The phrase of being filled with the Spirit, can, to be sure, never prove it. (Compare Acts vi. 5, 5; vii. 55; ix. 24; xiii. 9; Luke i. 15; and especially Eph. v. 18.) And had the analogy, which (I think, quite without reason) they suppose expedient between the imagined different cases of the first fruits of the proselytes of the gate, and of the idolatrous Gentiles, been really observed, then, according to the principles of these learned writers themselves, such an immediate effusion of the Spirit must have fallen on Sergus Paulus, as it did on Cornelius and his friends, rather than on these Antiochians, whom they (for reasons I am yet to learn,) call the harvest of idolatrous Gentiles, who were not called till the gospel had been preached through all Cyprus and Pamphylia, both to Jews and Gentiles.
which they had newly embraced, but were also rendered capable of carrying on the interests of Christianity in that place, when the first planters of their church could no longer continue to cultivate and water it.

IMPROVEMENT.

It is a great comfort to the ministers of the gospel, that amidst Ver. that incredulity which too generally prevails, any are found who will credit the gospel; any to whom the arm of the Lord is revealed, in conquering their prejudices against it: With a chosen remnant of these, God will support his faithful servants. O that the instances of that consolation may be more numerous, and more remarkable in our days!

It is matter of some encouragement when numbers croud to attend upon the preaching of the gospel; for faith cometh by hearing. (Rom. x. 17) They who reject the council of God against themselves, will no doubt be provoked at such a circumstance; and the malignity and envy of their hearts will stir up opposition and contention: But God knows how to bring good out of evil; nor should his ministers be discouraged by the contradiction of sinners, but rather turn themselves to those who may be more willing to hear. In the mean time, let those that thrust from them the word of God know, that, in the language of scripture, they judge themselves unworthy of eternal life; and since they will not condescend to accept of it on these terms, the great Author thereof will not condescend to give it on any other. And the day is coming when we shall see, and the whole world shall see, how much reason they have to glory in that height of Spirit which they now shew.

Let it be the daily joy of our souls, that the Lord Jesus Christ was given for a light of the Gentiles, and for God’s salvation to the ends of the earth. Through the tender mercies of our God, the dayspring from on high hath visited us, (Luke i. 78.) Let us pray that it may arise and shine upon the remotest nations! And indeed if we are entirely unconcerned about its propagation in the world, we have great reason to fear, that we have ourselves no part in the saving benefits which it confers. May the silver trumpet every where sound, to awaken the nations to list themselves in this holy war under Christ, against all the enemies of salvation; and may many appear determined for eternal life, and like these converts of Antioch courageously set themselves in battle array against every thing which would oppose their progress towards it!

Vain then will all the rage of persecution be, by whomsoever it is
is excited or maintained; though by persons of the highest rank or the most honoured characters. If the messengers of Christ be cast out of one place, they will appear with renewed zeal in another: And they who are proselyted to Christianity, though in a great fight of affliction, will have the Spirit of God and of glory resting upon them; and will be enabled to rejoice, not only in the midst of their afflictions, but on account of them. In the mean while, the dust shaken off from the shoes of the rejected ambassadors of the Prince of peace will be recorded as a witness against those that have despised their message, and will expose them to a final condemnation in the day of judgment more intolerable than that which was once executed on the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, or which their wretched inhabitants are then to expect. (Mark vi. 11.)

SECT. XXXI.

Paul and Barnabas, after some stay at Iconium, go to Lystra: The inhabitants of that city, struck by a miracle wrought on a lame man, could hardly be restrained from giving them divine honours. Acts XIV. 1—18.

Acts XIV. 1.

It was observed in the preceding section, that Paul and Barnabas being driven away from Antioch in Pisidia, by the persecution which the Jews raised against them, retired to Iconium, a city of Lycaonia in the Lesser Asia, to the north of Antioch. And it came to pass, in a very little time after their arrival at Iconium, that they went both together into the synagogue of the Jews there, and spake on the great subject of the gospel salvation in such a manner, that a great multitude both of the Jews and of the Greeks believed. But the unbelieving Jews, who were greatly provoked at the growing success of the gospel, and studied all they could to put a stop to its progress, stirred up the minds of the heathen inhabitants of the place, and filled them with malignity against the Christian brethren, and especially against those celebrated teachers of a religion

a Multitude—of the Greeks believed.] Dr. Whitby and several other learned writers seem to limit this text, more than there is any reason to do, by supposing the Greeks here mentioned to have been chiefly at least, proselytes of the gate. The argument from their being found in the Jewish synagogues is very inconclusive; for, as was observed before, the fame of such extraordinary teachers as Paul and Barnabas might naturally draw together great numbers of people, who did not usually worship in the synagogues.

b For
religion with respect to which they had entertained such unfavourable prejudices. Nevertheless God was pleased to interpose in such a manner as to prevent their rage from running presently to an extreme, and to animate his faithful servants amidst all the opposition and hardships they met with; for a considerable time therefore they continued their abode there, speaking freely in [the cause of] the Lord Jesus Christ, who bare witness to the word of his grace which they delivered, and gave a variety of miraculous signs and wonders to be done by their hands, which were of service to confirm the faith of the new converts; and to prevail with many others to receive the gospel, and might have convinced all the inhabitants, if they had exercised a becoming candour. But the multitude of the city was divided into two opposite parties, and some were of the same mind with the unbelieving Jews, whom they joined in desiring that these new preachers might be expelled as disturbers of the established religion; and others most cordially fell in with the apostles, whom they received as messengers from God, to guide men to true piety and eternal happiness. But on the whole, the magistrates favoured the contrary side; and as a violent attempt was going to be made by those who had conspired against them, both of the Gentiles and of the Jews, with their respective rulers, to injure and even to stone them, as blasphemers; when the project was just ripe for execution,

b For a considerable time, therefore, &c.] Some think the second verse should be included in a parenthesis, and that the particle therefore refers to the success that Paul and Barnabas had met with at Iconium, (which had been mentioned ver. 1,) as what induced them to continue preaching there for a long time; while others, who would make no break in the connection, choose rather that γενεσία should be rendered For indeed; and, supposing the rage of the Jews to have been exasperated by their long stay and preaching there, would render the beginning of this verse, For indeed they had tarried a long time, &c. (See Dr. Whitby in loc.) But the connection may be well enough preserved, though we retain the usual sense of the particle γένεσις, if we consider what is here expressed, as an account of the great firmness and undaunted zeal, with which these faithful ministers pursued their work; that, since the Jews were so intent upon opposing them, and laboured to incense the Gentiles too against them, they therefore thought it needful to continue preaching with the greater boldness, and to make the longer stay there, for the establishment and confirmation of the new converts; and for the vindication of their own character, and of the cause they were engaged in, from the injurious calumnies and false aspersions of their enemies, till they proceeded to such violent methods, that they no longer could remain with any safety there.

c Speaking freely in [the cause of] the Lord.] Some would render the words παραπάνοιαν τινι τω Κυριε, being inspired with great resolution by the Lord; but, though this was undoubtedly the case, I am not sure the words themselves express it. Beza renders it, in a dependance on the Lord; and indeed the original will very naturally bear that sense.

d Having
They go away to Lystra, where they cure a lame man.

They were aware of it, and fled unto Lystra and Derbe, cities of Lycaonia, and unto the region that both round about:

7 And there they preached the gospel.

8 And there sat a certain man at Lystra, impotent in his feet, being a cripple from his mother's womb, who never had walked.

9 The same heard Paul speak: who steadfastly beholding him, and perceiving that he had faith to be healed,

10 Said with a loud voice, Stand upright on thy feet. And he leaped and walked.

11 And when the people saw what Paul had done, they lift up their voices, saying in the raptures

And the multitude who were present when this wonderful case was wrought, seeing what Paul had done by only speaking a word, were all in

11 And the multitude who were present when this wonderful case was wrought, seeing what Paul had done by only speaking a word, were all in raptures

Having received intelligence of it.] They were, as it should seem, informed of it, when the mob was actually raised, and coming towards the place where they were.

Some have imagined, it might be by inspiration; but I see no necessity for having recourse to that.
the speech of Lycaonia. The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men.

12 And they called Barnabas, Jupiter; and Paul, Mercurius, because he was the chief speaker.

13 Then the priest of Jupiter which was before their city, brought oxen and garlands unto the gates, and would have done sacrifice raptures of astonishment, and lifted up their voices in loud acclamations saying in the Lycaonian language, The gods are descended from heaven to us, in the form and likeness of men.

And, perceiving Barnabas to be a person of the better presence, and of the more majestic port, they called him Jupiter; and Paul, who was a little active man, they called Mercury, because he was the leader of the discourse, on which account they thought he might more probably be their God of eloquence.

And the priest of that Jupiter which was esteem- ed the tutelar deity of that place, and [whose image] was therefore placed in a temple erected to him before their city, in the suburbs, not far from the place where the miracle was wrought, immediately brought oxen crowned with garlands, according to their usual manner, to the gates of the place where Paul and Barnabas were; and would, with the multitude, have offered sacrifice.

"In the Lycaonian language.] This, as some say, was not a dialect of the Greek, but rather approached the Syriac, as that of Cappadocia is said to have done.

[The gods are descended to us in the likeness of men.] It appears from numberless passages in the Heathen writers, that they suppose this often to have happened. See Homer. Odys. p. 485; & sq. Heioid. Op. S Dier. ver. 249, 254, & sq. Catull. de Nupt. Pel. ver. 384, & sq. and the notes of Grotius and Eisner on this place, which last great critic has shown, that this notion particularly prevailed with respect to Jupiter and Mercury. Observ. Vol. I. p. 430—432.

"Barnabas they called Jupiter, and Paul Mercury." Chrysostom observes, (and after him Mr. Fleming, Christol. Vol. II. p. 226,) that the Heathens represented Jupiter as an old but vigorous man, of a noble and majestic aspect, and large robust make, which therefore he supposes might be the form of Barnabas; whereas Mercury appeared young, little, and nimble, as Paul might probably do, for he was yet but a young man. Yet the reason given by Luke is different, and more naturally leads to the turn given in the paraphrase—Jamblicus calls Mercury Θεός των λόγων πνευματικός, with a remarkable correspondence to the words of the sacred historian, εἰς αὐτον απὸ των λόγων κηρύχθη. See other learned illustrations of this title, cited by Mr. Bisсоe at Boyle's Lect. chap. viii. § 8, p. 313, 314.—Mr. Harrington well observes, (in his Works, p. 330,) that this persuasion might gain the more easily on the minds of the Lycaonians, on account of the well-known fable of Jupiter and Mercury, who were said to have descended from heaven in human shape, and to have been entertained by Lycaon, from whom the Lycaonians received their name.

h The priest of Jupiter, [whose image was before their city.] Elsner has shown, that it was customary to build temples to their deities in the suburbs, and to set up their images before the city at the gates. (Observ. Vol. I. p. 425.) See also Mr. Bisсоe, chap. viii. § 9, p. 314.—It has been argued from hence, that the Heathens considered their several images, of Jupiter for instance, as so many distinct Jupiters, that is, as having some spirit sent from the god, to whom their worship was ultimately referred, to reside in them; which, as Mr. Warburton well observes, may account for the disputes between two Jupiters, the Tonants, and the Capulcinus, mentioned by Suetonius. August. cap. 91. See Ward. Div. Legat. Vol. I. p. 279, 281. Not.

"Orea crowned with garlands." It is well known, that the Heathens used to crown both the images of their deities, and the victims they offered to them, with clusters of flowers, as appears from a multitude of passages both in the Latin and Greek classics. See Raphel. Not. ex. Herod. p. 254; and Mr. Bisсоe, as above, p. 315.

k Obnoxious
sacrifice [to them] to acknowledge the obligation of being under to them for this condescending and beneficent visit, and to take this opportunity of imploring their continued protection in their public and private affairs.

14 But as they were leading on the sacrificial procession towards them, the apostles Barnabas and Paul, hearing of the purpose for which it was intended, were struck with a becoming horror at the proposal, and rent their mantles in token of that mixture of indignation and sorrow with which they beheld this strange abuse of a miracle, wrought to destroy that idolatry which from thence they took occasion to practise; and in this moving and expressive manner they ran in among the multitude, crying out with the greatest earnestness, And saying, O Sirs, unhappy and misguided men as ye are, why do ye these things with regard to us? We are not what ye imagine us to be; and far from having any title to divine honours, we assure you that we also are mortal men as others are, obnoxious to the same common infirmities of human life with yourselves; and are come hither with a design of preaching the Gospel to you, that you may be directed to the proper object of religious adoration, and may effectually be taught to turn from these vanities which you now worship, to Jehovah, the one only living and true God, who made the heaven and the earth, and the sea, and all things which are contained in them; Who in former generations permitted all the heathen nations to walk in their own ways, and left them under the darkness into which they were gradually fallen, without giving them any revelation of himself, either by a written law, or by prophetic messengers: Though even then he did not leave himself entirely without witness, nor were they altogether destitute of any

15 And saying, Sirs, why do ye these things? We are also men of like passions with you, and preach unto you that ye should turn from these vanities unto the living God, which made heaven and earth, and the sea and all things that are therein:

16 Who in times past suffered all nations to walk in their own ways.

17 Nevertheless, he left not himself without witness, in that he did was to that of the Heathen philosophers, who, instead of entering a generous protest against the absurdities of the established worship, though it often led to such scandalous immoralities; meanly conformed to it themselves, and taught their disciples to esteem such conformity an essential part of a good citizen's character, which seems to have been the design even of the dying words of Socrates himself, a circumstance hardly to be mentioned without tears. See Mr. Warburton's Div. Legat. Vol. I. p. 500.
did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.

any means of coming to a better knowledge; for he was continually testifying his deity, his presence, and his care, by the substantial fruits of his liberality, doing good to his creatures with a bountiful hand, [and] giving us all, whether Jews or Gentiles, refreshing showers of rain from heaven, which none of the idols could grant; and, through the concurring influences of the sun, producing fruitful seasons, administering thereby not only to the necessities but the delights of life, and filling our hearts with food and with gladness too. Since therefore to all his other favours he has now added this, of sending us with these miraculous powers to instruct you in his nature, and to point out to you the way to happiness, forbear these vain and offensive rites; and set yourselves seriously to attend to the gospel, which it is our great business here to proclaim.

And saying these things, plain and reasonable as they were, they hardly restrained the people from their purpose, and scarcely could prevent their sacrificing to them.

IMPROVEMENT.

Happy are the ministers of Christ, in the midst of labours and persecution too, if they have the presence of their master with them; and if the Lord, as in this instance, bear witness to the word of his grace. Almighty Saviour, leave us not destitute of that presence which is our hope and our joy! But bear witness with all thy faithful servants, while they are bearing their testimony to thee!

Infinite Wisdom governs those revolutions in providence which seem most mysterious. These repeated oppositions which the apostles met with in their work, seemed to threaten their destruction; but they served in effect to render their testimony more credible, when borne in the midst of so many dangers: They served also to

He did not leave himself without witness.] As a friend, in sending us frequent presents, expresses his remembrance of us and affection to us, though he neither speak nor write, so all the gifts of the divine bounty which are scattered abroad on every side, (as a late pious philosopher most justly observes,) are so many witnesses sent to attest the divine care and goodness; and they speak it in very sensible language to the heart, though not to the ear. (See Nature Displayed, Vol. II. p. 7.) Raphelius ex Herod, p. 365, 366.) has a curious note here, in which he shews that the Pagans spoke of rain as given by God, and which is very remarkable, not as coming from the Gods; and this he thinks a remnant of patriarchal piety, in a form of speech older than the ‘first idolatry;’ So that there is no need, with Dr. Hammond, to have recourse to the Jewish proverb, that the keys of life, rain, and the resurrection, were always kept in God’s own hand. Compare Jer. xiv. 22.
to exercise the graces of these new converts; to add a growing
evidence to christianity throughout the remotest ages; and they
were the means of spreading the gospel to a great variety of
places, when the apostles were forced to make such short visits at
many, through the inhospitality of those from whom they deserved
a quite different reception.

Ver. The cure of this cripple was but one miracle of a thousand
which the power of Christ made common in those days; the ef-
fect of it one way and another was very remarkable: The multi-
tude struck with the exertion of an energy truly divine, by an
error to which human nature is (alas) too incident, fix their eyes
on the instruments, and pay that honour to mortal men which
was due only to that God by whom that wonderful work was
wrought. Yet a mixture of piety amidst all that superstition
cannot but strike the mind with some pleasure, joined with the
compassion we must feel to find it so wretchedly misguided and
alayed. When they thought the gods were come down in human
form, they were desirous immediately to pay honour to them. The
Lord Jesus Christ is God manifested in the flesh; but alas, in how
different a manner was he generally received! received indeed
with outrage and infamy, instead of that prostrate adoration to
which he had so just a claim.

14 These his servants with an honest indignation reject the homage
offered to them, and regard it with horror rather than delight. It
was a courageous testimony which they bore to the vanity of
these Heathen deities, while surrounded with adorers and their
priests. While they confess their own infirmities, as weak and
mortal men, they with heroic boldness and sacred truth proclaim
the one living and true God, the Creator and Governor of heaven
and earth, of the sea, and all that is therein. Let us adore him, as
the Author of all the blessings of providence, as giving us rain
from heaven and fruitful seasons; and while our hearts are filled
with food and gladness, let our hearts rejoice in him, and to him
let us devote that vigour which we derive from his daily bounty.
Above all, let us praise him that we have not these witnesses alone,
of his presence, his power, and his goodness; but that he who
once left the nations to go on in their own ways, has now revealed
unto us the path of salvation, and given us that true bread from
heaven, of which if a man eat he shall live for ever. (John vi. 58.)
The Jews incense the people, who stone Paul.

SECT. XXXII.

Paul and Barnabas being driven from Lystra, by a persecution excited by the Jews, return through Derbe, Pisidia, and Pamphylia, to Antioch in Syria, where they make some abode. Acts XIV. 19, to the end.

Acts XIV. 19.

WHEN Paul and Barnabas had put a stop to that undue respect the people would have shewn them, and had instructed them to worship none but the true God, they still continued for a little while at Lystra, and endeavoured to improve that advantage which the cure of the lame man had given them, for preaching the gospel there. But though they were so happy as to make some converts to it, they were soon interrupted in their work; for quickly after this [some] Jews came thither from the neighbouring cities of Antioch and Iconium, and persuaded the multitude to disbelieve what they taught; and representing them to be deceivers, they prejudiced their minds to such a degree against their persons and their doctrine, that the very people who but just before would have adored them as deities, now rose to put them to death as malefactors: And accordingly having stoned Paul in a tumultuous manner in the streets, they dragged him out of the city, supposing him to be dead. But as the disciples were gathered about him, with a view of performing the last office of affection to him, in bearing him to his funeral with proper regard, to their unspeakable surprise they found him so restored by the power of Christ, that he immediately rose up as in perfect health, and his bruises offered to Barnabas, who seems to have had no share in the effects of this popular fury: and it is probable, that Paul's distinguished zeal marked him out as the object of their distinguished cruelty. But it is surely a strange thought of Woltzerenius, that this was permitted by God as a punishment on Paul for the concern he had in stoning Stephen. However, the apostle might well insert it in the brief history he gives us of his suffering, 2 Cor. xi. 23—27, of which few are particularly mentioned in this book.

Acts XIV. 19.

20 Howbeit as the disciples stood round about him, he rose up and came into the city; and the next day he departed with Barnabas to Derbe.

2 Having stoned Paul they dragged him out of the city, &c.] Probably they left his body exposed to the open air, intending that he (to whom a few days before they would have sacrificed oxen,) should be a prey to wild beasts or birds. There might be something extraordinary in the appearance of his body in this circumstance, which led them to conclude he was dead, while he was yet alive: for one can hardly imagine, that they would have contended with any very slight and transient inquiry, whether he were dead or no:—It is observable, we read of no such injury offered to Barnabas, who seems to have had no share in the effects of this popular fury; and it is probable, that Paul's distinguished zeal marked him out as the object of their distinguished cruelty. But it is surely a strange thought of Woltzerenius, that this was permitted by God as a punishment on Paul for the concern he had in stoning Stephen. However, the apostle might well insert it in the brief history he gives us of his suffering, 2 Cor. xi. 23—27, of which few are particularly mentioned in this book.
bruises were so healed, that he entered into the city again, and was not only able to walk about it, but the next day found that he was capable of undertaking a journey, and departed with Barnabas to Derbe, a city of Lycaonia, on the borders of Cappadocia; as they did not think it convenient to proceed in their progress to Galatia, Phrygia, or any more distant province.

21 And having preached the gospel at Derbe, to the inhabitants of that populous city, and made a considerable number of disciples there, they trod back the road they had taken, and returned first to Lystra again, and then to Iconium and Antioch in Pisidia; confirming the souls of the disciples which they had made in those places in their former journey, exhorting them to continue in the christian faith, with a steadfastness becoming the evidence and importance of it; and [testifying] that it is necessary we should enter into the kingdom of God through many tribulations, which, as God had been pleased to order matters, will unavoidably lie in our way; but which it will be abundantly worth our while to encounter in so good a cause, and in the views of so glorious a reward.

22 And when they had with the concurrent suffrage of the people constituted presbyters for them in every church, who might take care of them when just after he had been stoned, and dragged about the streets, and left for dead, he should rise and walk back into the city, must certainly be the effect of a miraculous cure, approaching, as near as one can conceive, to a resurrection from the dead. This is the more illustrated by his going the next day to Derbe; whereas, in a course of nature he would then have felt his bruises much more than at first, and probably, after the best care that could have been taken of him, would hardly have been able to turn himself in his bed.

23 And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and

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21 And when they had preached the gospel to that city, and had taught many; they returned again to Lystra, and to Iconium, and Antioch.

22 Confounding the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.

23 And when they had constituted presbyters for them, &c.] Mr. Harrington (in his Works, p. 327.) renders the words χαρισματικος διδασκαλος, προφητευς, ordained them elders by the votes of the people, urging the authority of Suidas, who explains χαρισματικος by κοπεις παιδεως, "the election of magistrates, or ratification of laws by many, signified by holding up, or stretching out the hand." (Compare 2 Cor. viii. 19.) Raphelius has confirmed the same interpretation; (Note, ex Xen. p. 165.) And the old English Bible translated it, When they had ordained them elders by election. The celebrated author first mentioned has endeavoured largely to vindicate this interpretation, from the exceptions of Dr. Hammond, Dr. Seaman, and others, who make χαρισματικος the same with χρηστος, or the laying on of hands. See Harrington's Prepositions of popular government, chap. v.
and had prayed with fasting, they recommended them to the Lord, on whom they believed.

when they were gone away to other parts, having prayed to God with solemn fasting, that a blessing might attend their inspection and labours they committed them, in the infant and distressed state of the church at that time, to the guardianship and care of the Lord Jesus Christ, in whom they had believed, and so quitted them, with a cheerful confidence that he would carry on that good work, which in the midst of so much opposition he had happily begun amongst them.

And passing through the province of Pisidia, 24 they came again to Pamphylia, which was the country where they had landed when they came from Cyprus. (Chap. xiii. 13.) And having spoken the word of the kingdom in the city of Perga, where they had been before, they went down from thence to Attalia which was a maritime town on the coast of the Mediterranean Sea. And not thinking it proper at that time to travel through Cilicia, though they were then on the borders of it, and some Christian churches were already planted there, (compare chap. ix. 30. xv. 41.) they took shipping, and sailed from thence to the coast of Syria, and went

---This is not a place for discussing so nice a question; but, as I am in my own judgment convinced he is in the right, I chose to paraphrase the passage agreeable to that notion, though I do not fix it in the translation. I have not rendered it ordained, because custom has, among us especially affixed to that word in such a connection, the idea of laying on hands in prayer, to invest a person with, or mark him out for the ministerial office; and this which I doubt not was here done, seems to be inferred in the following clause.---It seemed to me, that the word [constitute] would properly express the apostles presiding in that previous choice, which probably the people signified by προφήται, the stretching of their hands. And this interpretation appears most naturally to suit the circumstances of things, as well as the import of the original words made use of; for the people would, no doubt, have a great deference to the judgment of the apostles in the choice of those officers, who were in some degree to fill up their places in exercising the Christian ministry among them; and on the other hand, whatever extraordinary power their institution to this office by the apostles might have given, and whatever acts of direct authority it might have warranted, yet considering how much the comfort and usefulness (not to say the subsistence) of these ministers, who had no human laws to establish them, would depend upon the free consent of the people, and what a natural authority the express declaration of that consent would give them in the execution of their office, the prudence, as well as the known humility of the apostles, would lead them to take that consent as expressly as they could; (compare 1 Cor. ix. 14, 15. 2 Cor. xi. 9, 1 Thess. ii. 6. Phil. ver. 8, 9. 1 Pet. v. 3.) which it would be the more natural and expedient to do, as the civil government of these places was in a great measure popular, (as Mr. Harrington has shown, ibid. chap. ii.) and as the apostles also knew, how expressly the consent of the Jewish people had been taken in the settlement of their civil and ecclesiastical affairs, which the same writer has also well illustrated, ibid. chap. iii.—Sir Norton Knatchbull has an admirable note here, in which he establishes the version I have given, by many incontestible authorities even of ecclesiastical writers: And though it be true, that in some cases (as Dr. Hammond has learnedly shown,) ενεργον signifies to constitute or appoint to an office, where there could be no voting at all, I cannot see any evidence, that the word is so to be interpreted here.
Reflections on the benefit of the Christian ministry.

went up the river Orontes to Antioch in that province; from whence they had, by the divine appointment, been solemnly recommended to the grace of God, for that work, which they had so vigorously prosecuted, and so happily accomplished: (chap. xiii. 2, 3.) They were therefore very desirous, both of rendering a particular account of their ministry there, and also of returning their grateful acknowledgments to the divine providence and grace, to which they owed their safety amidst so many extreme dangers, and their success in such difficult labours.

27 And when they were come thither, and had gathered the church together, they related to the brethren at Antioch what great and wonderful things God had done with and by them, in the whole of their voyage and journey in all the countries through which they had passed; (compare chap. xv. 12, and xxi. 19.) and more especially acquainted them with what extraordinary success he had been pleased to bless their ministry among the Heathen, and how he had opened a door of faith and hope to the Gentiles, who had so long continued in ignorance, idolatry, and misery, making the gospel shine into their hearts, and graciously receiving them into the number of his people.

28 And Providence permitting them, after their long fatigues, to repose themselves a while in that agreeable situation amidst their dear brethren and friends, they resided there a considerable time with the disciples, establishing them in their adherence to the gospel, and in a behaviour suitable to their profession of it.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. Who would value himself upon the applause of a multitude, 19 when he sees how soon these changeable inhabitants of Lystra were instigated to assail him as a malefactor, whom but a few days before they were ready to adore as a god, and how easily they were prevailed upon to exchange the instruments of sacrifice for those of murder! They stone him, and drag him out of the city for

*Opened a door of faith to the Gentiles.* It is certain, the gospel was carried by the apostles in this journey to many celebrated countries, to which it had never before reached; but as on the one hand it is certain, it had been preached to the Gentiles before, so on the other, it seems, a groundless conjecture of Mr. Cradock, that in this journey Paul went as far as to Illyricum, [a province in Europe, on the coast of the Adriatic Sea,] preaching the gospel, (Rom. xvi. 19.) and suffered all the hardships to which he refers, 2 Cor. 21, & seq. (See 1st Apos. Hist. p. 18.)
for dead: And who that had seen this lamentable sight would not have concluded, that here the labours of Paul were ended, and that henceforward we should hear no more of him in this glorious history? But God, who amidst all their outrage secretly preserved the flame of life from being utterly extinguished, interposed miraculously to heal his wounds and bruises, and on a sudden restored him to perfect health. Thus could he always have protected his apostles, so that, in a literal sense, not one hair of their heads should have perished; but it was more suitable to those wise maxims on which he proceeded in the government of the world, to suffer them at length to fall by their enemies, and to pour out their blood as a seal of their doctrine, and of the sincerity with which they taught it; nor could any death be more glorious, or, when taken in its full connection, any more happy.

With pleasure let us trace these holy men in all the stages of their undaunted and successful course; converting some, confirming others, and upon the whole, like their divine Master, scattering blessings wherever they come. Let their exhortation still have its power with us, to engage our stedfast continuance in the Christian faith, through whatever tribulations we are called to pass; be the way ever so rugged and painful, let it be enough for us that it leads to the kingdom of heaven: Thankfully let us own the divine goodness in all the assistances we receive as we pass through it, and particularly in that which all ages derive from the Christian ministry settled in the church by the wise care of its blessed Founder, to be a perpetual blessing to it. May all the prayers which are offered for those, who in succeeding generations are set apart to the work in those solemn devotions which usually attend their ordination to it, be heard and answered! And may ministers and people flourish in knowledge and piety, under the constant care of the great Shepherd and Bishop of souls!

The success which attended these two apostles in their course and the pleasure with which they returned to the place from whence they had so affectionately been recommended to the grace of God, may be an encouragement to our prayers and our labours. Whatever we do in the advancement of the gospel, let us, with these holy men acknowledge, that God does it by us; and let us pray, that the door of faith may be opened so wide, that all the nations of the earth may enter in, and be saved.
SECT XXXIII.

Some Jewish converts urging it as necessary that the Gentile Christians should observe the law of Moses, Paul and Barnabas go to Jerusalem to consult the apostles and elders upon that question: An assembly is called, in which Peter declares on the side of their liberty. Acts XV. 1.—11.

ACTS XV. 1.

The conclusion of the last section left Paul and Barnabas at Antioch, where they continued a considerable time. And now a circumstance occurred which was the occasion of very considerable consequences in the Christian church there and elsewhere? for some persons who came thither from Judea, taught the brethren in their public and private discourses, insisting with great earnestness, and saying to them in the strongest terms, That except ye be circumcised according to the manner prescribed in the law of Moses, and become obedient to all the whole system of his precepts, ye cannot possibly be saved by the gospel; which was intended to make all that are converted to be Jews, and that they could not otherwise be true and genuine Christians.

2 There being therefore a contention upon this account at Antioch, where there were several converts from among the Gentiles, to whom this doctrine could not but be very disagreeable; and no small debate arising [on the part of Paul and Barnabas, who strenuously opposed these Jewish zealots, and maintained against them, that Christians converted from other nations were as free from the Mosaic law as if it had never been given at all; the church thought it advisable to get the best satisfaction they could in an affair which affected the liberties and consciences of so many; and for this purpose they resolved that Paul and Barnabas, and some others of their number, should go up to the apostles, and elders

Acts XV. 1. And certain men which came down from Judea, taught the brethren, and said, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved.

2 When therefore Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and disputation with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question.

a They resolved that Paul, &c. should go up to the apostles.] It is generally allowed, that this is the journey to which Paul refers, Gal. ii. 1, 2, when he says, that he went up by revelation, which is very consistent with this; for the church in sending them might be directed by a revelation made either immediately to Paul, or to some other person, relating to this important affair. Important indeed it was, and necessary that these Jewish impositions should be solemnly opposed in time, because a great number of converts, that were zealous for the law, would eagerly fall in with such a notion, and be ready to contend for the observance of it. Many of the Christians
5 And being brought on their way by the church, they passed through Pheœnicia, and Samaria, declaring the conversion of the Gentiles: and they caused great joy unto all the brethren.

4 And when they were come to Jerusalem, they were received of the church, and of the apostles and elders, and they declared all things that God had done with them.

5 But there rose up certain Christians at Antioch undoubtedly knew, that Paul was under an extraordinary divine direction, and therefore would readily have acquiesced in his determination alone; but, as others might have prejudices against him, on account of his having been so much concerned with the Gentiles, it was highly expedient to take the concurrent sense and judgment of the apostles of the circumcision upon this occasion.

b And elders at Jerusalem.] By what authority these have been concluded to be some of the hundred and twenty mentioned. Acts i. 15, I am yet to learn, notwithstanding what is suggested by Dr. Whitby in loc. and Dr. Benson, Vol. II. p. 55.—It seems to me, that any officers of the church, to whom the stated inspection of it was committed, might properly be called elders, whether they were, or were not, of that number.

c Being brought forward on their journey by the church.] This is plainly the sense of the word προσώπωσιν, which is commonly used to express the regard which was shewn to those, who travelled any where to preach the gospel, or to take are of the affairs of the church, whom it was usual to bring forward on their way. Compare Acts xx. 38. xxi. 5. Rom. xv. 24. 1 Cor. xvi. 6. 11. 2 Cor. i. 16. Tit. iii. 13. and 3 John ver. 6.

d Relating to all their fellow Christians—the conversion of the Gentiles.] It is surprising that the author of Miscell. Sacra. [Essay iv. p. 50, & seq.] and Dr. Benson, (Vol. II. p. 49, 50,) should think, Paul and Barnabas told their story in so ambiguous a manner, as to leave room for those that heard them, both here, and at Jerusalem, to conclude, that the Gentiles of whom they spake were only proselytes, of the gate and not idolatrous Gentiles. Had the distinction been material, it would no doubt have been inquired into, and though no inquiry had been made, yet it would have been very disingenuous in Paul and Barnabas, when, (as these writers allow) their work had chiefly lain among the idolatrous Gentiles, to conceal that circumstance, and leave the assembly in general terms to make a decree relating to Christian Gentiles, in which in fact but a very small part of them should be concerned. But indeed it is most groundless to imagine, that, if the distinction had been ever so great between proselytes of the gate and other Gentiles, it should in any circumstances, or at any time have been an obnoxious thing, or a thing that should need concealment, that the true God had been preached to idolators. As for the argument from Gal. ii. 2. I may hereafter give my reasons for concluding, it refers to Paul's teaching, that even the Jews themselves were by Christ freed from any general obligation in conscience to obvserve the Mosaic ceremonies.
The apostles and elders meet to consider it.

And accordingly when the day came, the apostles and elders, were gathered together, to consult upon this affair; and to consider what was fit to be determined in it. And after much debate, Peter rose up in the assembly, and said to them, Men [and] brethren, you very well know that some considerable time since, the ever blessed God, who is so remarkably among us by many gracious tokens of his presence, chose that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe in that glorious dispensation.

But some of the sect of the Pharisees, &c. I cannot but wonder with Raphelus, (see Herod. p. 365.) that Beza and some others should, think, this is a circumstance which Paul adds to his story, when the connection so evidently shows them to be the words of Luke the historian, informing us, that these messengers' found some at Jerusalem, who held the same unhappy principles which had so much disturbed the peace of the church at Antioch. To support the other interpretation Mr. L'Enfant is oblig'd to make an addition to the text, and render it, But [said they] some of the Pharisees, &c. See Wolf. Cur. Philol. 1606.

After much debate. The debate which arose in this assembly may indeed prove, that there were some in the church at Jerusalem, who had not a due regard to the authority of the apostles; but it cannot, as many have supposed, afford any just argument against their inspiration; for this dispute does not appear to have been among the apostles themselves; and, if they really had debated the case a while, their decision at last might have been under an unerring direction; And I know not any reason to conclude, that their inspiration was always so interminable and express as to supersede any deliberation in their own minds, or any consultation with each other.

God among us chose. There seems as, Heinsius and many others have observed, something harsh in this expression, to take it as if Peter had said, "God chose me from among us all." The words among us are wanting in the Syriac Version, and some read among you; but the sense given in the paraphrase seems so easy and pertinent, that I see no reason to wish for any authority to change the received reading.

That the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel. It is surprising to me, that the learned authors I have so often mentioned above should argue, that, because the persons to whom Peter first preached the gospel were not idolaters, that is, because Cornelius was a worshipper of the true God, (for what his friends were, none can certainly say,) therefore the question now before this assembly must only be, "Whether proselytes of the gate were obliged to observe the whole of Moses?" (See Misc. Sacri. Essay IV. and Dr. Benson, Vol. II. chap. 3, § 4, 5, 6.) I see not the force of this argument, since it evidently takes it for granted, both that the assembly would know and recollect that they were proselytes of the gate, merely from

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And God which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us:

And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith.

Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?

But we believe, that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, we shall be saved even as they.

from his calling them Gentiles, and also that circumcision would be judged more necessary for such converts than for those who had before been idolaters; both which suppositions appear to me very unwarrantable. Peter's argument plainly is, Circumcision cannot be necessary for Gentile converts, because God by the emission of his Spirit declared his acceptance of uncircumcised Gentiles in Cornelius' case: And this argument will be conclusive, if Gentiles be taken in the most extensive, which we are sure was the most usual sense of the word, that is, for all who are not, either by birth, or complete proselytism, Jews.
How early did the spirit of bigotry and imposition begin to work in the Christian church! That fatal humour of imposing a yoke on the neck of Christ's disciples, by making indifferent things necessary! An unmanly and antichristian disposition; which has almost ever since been rending the church to pieces, and clamorously throwing the blame on those who have been desirous, on principles truly evangelical, to stand fast in the liberty with which their divine Master hath made them free: (Gal. v. 1.) How foolish and how mischievous the error, of making terms of communion which Christ has never made; and how presumptuous the arrogance of invading his throne, to pronounce from thence dammatory sentences on those who will not, who dare not, submit to our uncommissioned and usurped authority.

Prudent undoubtedly was the part which these Antiochian Christians acted upon this occasion, in sending these messengers to the apostles for their determination: And it will be our prudence, now we can no longer in person consult those ambassadors of Christ, to make their writings the man of our counsel, and the standard both of our faith and worship; appealing to the tribunal of Christ, our master and our judge, from those uncharitable censures which we may sometimes incur even from his faithful though mistaken servants, for retaining the simplicity of that religion which these authorised interpreters of his will taught.

Great joy was occasioned to the churches through which Paul and Barnabas passed, when they recounted the conversion of the heathen: O that such joy may be renewed to us, by the success of all who with a truly apostolic self-denial and zeal go forth at any time to the vast multitudes of the Gentiles which yet remain on the face of this uncultivated earth of ours, so great a part of which is yet in a spiritual sense a wilderness! Whatever success they may have in one part of our Lord's vineyard, or we in another, let us all remember it is in consequence of what God does by us and by them; and let us adore the riches of divine grace, to which we owe it, that we are chosen to make a part of God's people ourselves, and to carry the knowledge and power of his gospel to others.

May our hearts be purified by a vital, and not merely enlightened by a notional faith! May that God, who knoweth all hearts, bear witness to us, by giving us his Holy Spirit, to seal us to the day of redemption! And being under the influence of this sacred agent, animated in the most amiable manner to adorn our profession, when we have done all, may we humbly repose ourselves upon the grace of
Paul and Barnabas relate what was done among the Gentiles.

of our Lord Jesus Christ, as knowing that it is only by the rich and free display of it, that after all our labour, obedience, and care, we can expect salvation.

SECT. XXXIV.

The speech of James, in the assembly of the apostles and elders at Jerusalem, with their decree in favour of the liberty of Gentile converts. Acts XV. 12—29.

Acts XV. 12.

It was observed in the last section, that a meeting of the apostles, and elders was held at Jerusalem, on account of that attempt which the Judaizing Christians had made at Antioch, to bring the believing Gentiles under the yoke of the Mosaic law; and an account was given of that speech in their favour with which Peter had opened it, wherein he recounted the story of Cornelius, and the manner in which he and his friends were admitted into the church, without circumcision, yet with most evident tokens of divine approbation. It was then judged convenient, that they who had been in a peculiar manner the apostles of the Gentiles, should proceed with their narration: And accordingly the whole multitude which was assembled, kept silence, and attended to Barnabas, and Paul, while they were relating what great signs and wonders God had done among the heathen by them, to reclaim them from their idolatries; and with what miraculous operations he had confirmed their method of admitting them into the Christian church, though they never made any effort towards engaging them to be circumcised, and become Jews.

Then

a The whole multitude.] I suppose this whole multitude is spoken of ver. 22, as the whole church; for I cannot enter into the force of those reasons on which the learned Beza concludes, that all that is mentioned from the sixth to the twenty-first verse passed in a synod of ministers only, and was not communicated to the rest of the church till afterwards, when they acquiesced in the latter, which contained the result of this meeting; ver. 22, 5 seq. It seems to me most probable, that it was in one of their worshiping assemblies that Paul and Barnabas had declared all things that God had done with them; (ver. 4.) and that now at another, yet more numerous, and held on this particular occasion, they told the story more largely, with an account of particular miracles and other occurrences: And this the word [multitude] seems farther to imply. Yet I presume not absolutely to determine the question.

b Done among the heathen by them, to reclaim them from their idolatries.] For the reasonableness of taking it in this extent, see note b, § 33, p. 124.

c James
James shews, that this agreed with what the prophets said,

Then after they had done speaking, James the son of Alpheus, one of the apostles, answered, saying, Men [and] brethren, I desire you would attentively hearken unto me, while I give you my most deliberate thoughts on this important question. Our beloved brother, Simon Peter hath just been relating, how God first looked down on the Gentiles in his abundant mercy, to take from among them a people, for the honour of his name, who should with us be accounted to him for a generation; sending his servant to them in an extraordinary manner; and crowning his labours with such tokens of success, and such characters of divine acceptance, as could leave no doubt as to the regularity of his proceedings; to all which the relations made by our other brethren, Barnabas and Paul, do wonderfully agree. And, though this may seem quite contrary to some of our prejudices in favour of our nation and the law of Moses, yet, if we will give ourselves leave impartially to examine and consider, we shall find it by no means incredible; for the words of the prophet harmonize with this, as it is written, particularly by Amos,

(15) And after they had held their peace, James answered, saying, Men and brethren, hearken unto me.

14 Simon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name.

15 And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written,

16 After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the same, that it may stand for ever; and I will set it up:

17 That the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the

corporeal officer, nor how little pretence any supposed episcopal power of James at Jerusalem could give him, to dictate to Peter and his other brethren, in deciding a cause, in which the whole Christian world, and not only his own supposed diocese was concerned.

These words are quoted from Amos ix. 11, 12, according to the reading of the Seventy, who might probably follow a correcter copy of the Hebrew than the present; and Bishop Chandler (of Christianity, p. 174.) seems very justly to argue, that the Jews understood and admitted the words in the sense that James quotes them, or they would not have submitted to his interpretation, considering how strongly they were prejudiced against the consequence he drew from them.
he Gentiles upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doth all these things.

18 Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world.

19 Wherefore my sentence is, that we trouble not them, which from among the Gentiles are turned to God.

20 But that we write unto

earnestly seek the Lord; even all the heathen nations upon whom my name is called, who in that day shall know my name, and be received into the number of my people, saith the Lord Jehovah, who by his almighty power, with unfeiling faithfulness, doth all those things.

[Note] such a prediction is agreeable to the wise and steady plan of the divine government; for all his works are from eternity itself known unto God, whom no unexpected event can ever surprise, but who has fixed his schemes on so perfect and exact a foresight of the most contingent events, that he is never under any necessity of changing them in the minutest circumstance.

Wherefore I cannot but determine in my own mind, and I doubt not but you will readily concur with me, that we ought not to disquiet those who from among the Gentiles are converted by divine grace to the knowledge and worship of the true God, and to obedience to the gospel, with such observances as those now in question; But only to write to them, that

* That the remainder of men, &c.] De Dieu has a learned and curious note here, to account for the variation of this quotation from the original. If the ancient reading were, That they may possess the remnant of Edom, (which there is room to question, we must suppose with Grothus, Cradock, and others, that, as the prophets declared some of the greatest enemies of the church, such as the Edomites were, should submit themselves to it, the apostle had a right to interpret these words, as in effect declaring, that all the residue of men, that is, the whole Heathen world, should be converted. — Dr. Sykes (of Christianity, p. 294) very justly refers this to be the bringing in the fulness of the Gentiles in the latter day; nevertheless, as he there well observes, they would in this view afford a very good argument for admitting in the most candid manner, those of them who were already converted. — The heathen upon whom the name of God is called, is so proper a description of those that are converted to the true religion, that, when any urge that it must refer to those who were before their conversion to Christianity worshippers of the true God, it only shews how much they are distressed for arguments to support an hypothesis. See below, note h.

f All his works are from eternity known unto God.] It is plain, the apostle does not (as some have strangely asserted) speak of God's works in the natural world, which had been nothing at all to his present purpose, but of his dispensations to the children of men. Now he could not know these, without knowing the characters and actions of particular persons, on a correspondence to which, the wisdom and goodness of these dispensations is founded. Thus, for instance, he must have known, there would be Gentile idolators, (a thing as dependant on the freedom of the human mind, as any thing we can imagine,) or he could not have known, that he would call them into his church. This text therefore must remain an unanswerable proof, amongst a thousand more from the word of God, that he certainly foreknows future contingencies.

* I cannot but determine in my own mind.] This the word may naturally express, and be taken to imply, judging in our own mind, without pretending to impose that judgment on others.

h Those who from among the Gentiles are converted to God.] It is evident, this description much better suits those, who were now, as it is elsewhere expressed, (1 Thess. i. 9,) turned from idols to serve the living and true God, than those who, having had the knowledge and fear of God before, were now instructed in what was peculiar to Christianity.
He concludes, that the Gentiles ought not to be circumcised.

they abstain from things grossly scandalous, and such as would give greatest offence to their brethren of the circumcision; particularly, from the abominable pollutions of things sacrificed unto idols, and fornication, and [from] eating that which is strangled, and [from] blood. And though the latter of these have no moral and universal evil in them, yet it is necessary to join the prohibition of them to that of the former; for we know that Moses hath from ancient generations had, and still continues to have, those who preach him and his institutions in every city, being read in all the Jewish synagogues every sabbath-day; and these things are so expressly forbidden in his law, that while the Gentile Christians indulge themselves in any of them, it will be impossible there should be that communion and harmony between them and the Jewish converts, which the honour and edification of the church requires.

This tended to include those converted from among the idolatrous Gentiles;” besides what has been noted on many passages above, to shew how unreasonable such an interpretation would be, I desire it may be considered farther, that the Jews must as much scruple to converse with one who had been an idolater, and continued, after becoming a Christian, to eat of those supposed unclean things, as with one who had before been a worshipper of the true God, and used them; and consequently that, if this decree were to be interpreted under such a limitation as these authors propose, it would have been quite insufficient for the intended purpose of accommodating affairs between Jewish and Gentile Christians, as nothing would have been done with respect to those of the latter who had been idolaters, though they were by far the more numerous of the Gentile converts. —This will more evidently appear, if the opposite opinion in question be compared with the occasion of enacting this decree. The Jewish zealots insisted upon it, that Gentile believers, should be circumcised. This council determined, that they should only observe those necessary things. Now, as it is certain the demand of circumcision was, and would be, made on all Gentile converts, and not merely on those who had known the true God before they became Christians, these injunctions must be as extensive as that demand. —Grotius has a learned and curious note on this text, which I could wish might be consulted by those that have opportunity.
This advice was very acceptable to the whole assembly, who unanimously declared their approbation of it; Now then it seemed good to the apostles and elders, and all the church there met together to send to Antioch, with Paul and Barnabas, some chosen men from among themselves, to add the greater authority to the report made in a matter of so great importance; and the persons they selected on this occasion were Judas surnamed Barsabas, and Silas, who were both men of principal account among the brethren, and persons who well deserved the high reputation they possessed.

These therefore they dispatched to Antioch, writing by their hand these things that follow:

"The apostles, and elders, and other brethren assembled at Jerusalem, send greeting to all the brethren, converted to the Christian faith from among the Gentiles, and particularly to those in Antioch, and the other parts of Syria, and in the province of Cilicia. Forasmuch as we have been informed, that some going out from among us with a pretence that we had sent them forth, to whom nevertheless we gave no commission to make use of our names, have troubled you with their discourses, unsettling your minds by confidently saying that [you must] all be circumcised, and keep all the precepts of the law of Moses, or otherwise you cannot possibly be saved: We, being unanimously assembled to debate this matter, have thought proper to send...

1 Judas surnamed Barsabas.] Some have thought, this was the same with Joseph called Barsabas, (Acts i. 25.) candidate with Matthias for the apostleship, the son of Alphaeus or Cleopas, and brother to at least two of the apostles, James now present and Jude; than whom we know not any one person, not an apostle, of greater note in the church at this time. Others suppose that he was brother to him. See Dr. Benson, Vol. II. p. 55.

2 Silas.] This seems to have been the person elsewhere called Silvanus; (2 Cor. i. 19 1 Thess. i. 1. 2 Thess. i. 1. 1 Pet. v. 12.) a most intimate friend and beloved companion of Paul, and as it seems also a citizen of Rome; Acts xvi. 37.

3 Writing, &c.] As for the construction of γραφός with απεστείλας, and some other supposed solecisms of this kind, I with pleasure refer the learned reader to Raphaelius, Not. ex. Herod, p. 370—372. and p. 510—513.
The letter from Jerusalem containing their decree.

sect. xxxiv.

Acts xv. 26. 27 With them we have therefore sent two of our brethren, Judas and Silas, the bearers hereof, who will also tell you by word of mouth the same things that we now write, together with the circumstances of our consultation on this head, which we pass over, as the particular detail of them would carry us beyond the proper bounds of a letter. For it hath seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and therefore to us, who desire in all things to conform ourselves to his sacred direction, to impose no further burden upon you besides these necessary things. Namely, that you abstain from things offered to idols, and from blood, and from any thing that is strangled, and from fornication; from which you cannot imagine the rest of forbidden meats, as well as circumcision and many other articles.

And from fornication. As the infancy of what is commonly called simple fornication was not so great among the Gentiles, as the nature of the crime deserved, it has been generally thought, that the church at Jerusalem chose to add this prohibition, though it might be a kind of digression from the immediate design of their letter to do it. Others interpret the word of marriage within the degrees of kindred prohibited by the Mosaic law, (Lev. xviii. 16.) Mr. L'Enfant would explain it of victims offered by prostitutes out of their scandalous hire; (Deut. xxii. 18.) which, he says, makes a beautiful sense, and obviates a very considerable difficulty. Hisius also vindicates this interpretation at large, and shews that Athanasius uses παραβαίνειν for παραβαίνειν. I pretend not absolutely to determine the question; but think it material to observe, that, if it be taken in the worst sense that can be imagined, it cannot prove the universal unlawfulness of eating blood, since not only that, but eating things sacrificed to idols and strangled, are joined with fornication; and yet we are sure, that neither of them were absolutely evil in themselves, or universally forbidden. (Compare 1 Cor. viii. 1, 8, 9. and the other texts cited above in note on ver. 20.) It is remarkable, that both Irenæus, (Adv. Her. lib. iii. cap. 12.) and Cyprian, (Testimon. lib. iii. cap. 119.) in quoting these words add, "And do not to others, what you would not have done unto us, being assembled with one accord, to send chosen men unto you, with our beloved Barnabas and Paul."

26 Men that have hazarded their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

27 We have sent therefore Judas, and Silas, who shall also tell you the same things by mouth.

28 For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things;

29 That ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from any thing that is strangled, and from fornication; from which you

That have exposed their lives, &c.] Such a testimony to the reputation of Paul and Barnabas, was far from being a mere compliment, but exceedingly prudent, as it might be of the means of removing the prejudices conceived against them by the Jewish converts or teachers, who, as it appears from many passages of the epistles, endeavoured as much as possible to lessen the character of these apostles. It would also be an useful expression of the harmony between them and those of the circumcision.

4 It hath seemed good to the Holy Spirit.] This may include the decision which the Spirit had given by his descent on Cornelius and his friends, but seems more directly to express the consciousness which this assembly had of being guided by his influences on their minds in their present determination. But it cannot be extended to any ecclesiastical councils that have not inspired apostles to preside, as they did here. See Bp. Barnet on the Articles, p. 196.

These necessary things.] They were all undoubtedly necessary, in order to promote a free converse between the Jewish and Gentile Christians, and especially to secure communion at the table of the Lord, where we cannot imagine that Jews would have eaten and drunk with persons, whom they thought in so polluted a state, as those who indulged themselves in the things here prohibited. On the other hand, it seems the Jews on these conditions gave up any farther debate about

unto us, being assembled with one accord, to send chosen men unto you, with our beloved Barnabas and Paul:

unto you, with our beloved Barnabas and Paul:
Reflections on the liberty given to the Gentile converts.

Let us adore the divine condescension in looking with pity upon the Gentiles, to take from among them a people for his name. We are that people; let it be our concern, that, as his name is named upon us, we render it becoming honours, and remember, what an obligation it lays upon us to depart from iniquity! (2 Tim. ii. 19.) May the fallen tabernacle of David also, in due time be raised up, and all its ruins repaired; that, when God's ancient people are remembered by him, the residue of men may seek after the Lord, and the fulness of the Gentiles may be brought in! God who hath a complete view of all his schemes, and of all his works from the foundation of the world, will accomplish this also in its season. In the mean time, let us gratefully acknowledge what he has already done.

Let us be peculiarly thankful that we are freed from the burthens of the Mosaic institution, and called to a law of liberty. Yet let us take due heed that we do not abuse it to licentiousness, (Gal. v. 19, 21) Let us learn from the tenor of this decree, tenderly to regard even the prejudices of our christian brethren, and to be careful that we do not violently overbear them; but rather that, so far as honour and conscience will allow, we become all things to all men, and be willing in some respects to deny ourselves, that we may not give unnecessary offence to others.

Most prudently did the apostles determine this affair, under the influence of the Divine Spirit; and whatever hath seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to them, let us treat with all becoming regard. —The messengers from Antioch, by whom they returned this decree, were persons of an amiable character indeed: They had hazarded unto yourselves." But, as no ancient version, or valuable manuscript, has this addition, and it seems not to suit the connection in which it stands, I cannot but conclude it the spurious interpolation of some, who admired this noble maxim so highly, as to attempt, though in an irregular method, to recommend it to the utmost.

1 From which you will do will to keep yourselves.] That is, you may hope it will end well. This gentle manner of concluding was worthy the apostolical wisdom and goodness. Too soon did succeeding councils of inferior authority, change it for the stile of anathemas: forms which have, I doubt not, proved an occasion of consecrating some of the worst passions of the human mind under sacred names, and which, like some ill-adjusted weapons of war, are most likely to hurt the hand from which they are thrown.

Improvement.

You will do well to keep yourselves at the greatest distance that may be. And so we bid you heartily Farewell; wishing you, with the sincerest affection, all peace and prosperity in our common Lord, which in the observation of these directions, you may expect.”
hazarded their lives in the service of Christ, and joyfully went on to expose them to new dangers; thinking themselves, no doubt, exceeding happy in the success of this negociation, as also in the society of those pious brethren of the circumcision, who accom-panied them in their return with this letter.—May the blessed time come, when the ministers of Christ of all denominations, laying aside their mutual animosities, shall agree to study the things which make for peace, and the things wherewith one may edify another! (Rom. xiv. 19.) Then will liberty and truth have a more easy and universal triumph, while love melts and cements those souls whom rigorous severity has only served to harden, to disunite and to alienate.

SECT. XXXV.

The messengers from the assembly at Jerusalem arrive at Antioch, and after continuing there some time, Paul with Silas, and Barnabas with John sirnamed Mark, set out different ways, to visit the churches they had lately planted. Acts XV. 30, to the end.

Acts XV. 30.

So when they were dismissed, they came to Antioch: and when they had gathered the multitude together, they delivered the epistle to them: And when they had read [it] they all rejoiced for the consolation [it brought], in assuring them, that so venerable an assembly concurred in vindicating their liberty from the yoke of the Mosaic ceremonies.

31 Which when they had read, they rejoiced for the consolation.

32 And Judas and Silas, being prophets also themselves, ex-horted the brethren with many words and confirmed them.

And
And having made some stay there, they were dismissed with great respect and most affectionate desires of prosperity and peace from the brethren at Antioch, to return to the apostles from whom they came; whose friendly care of them the church at Antioch most gratefully acknowledged. But Silas, having formed a most intimate and endearing friendship with Paul, thought proper to continue there a while longer than his companion Judas, who had come with him from Jerusalem.

Paul also and Barnabas continued with the 35 disciples at Antioch, and employed their time there in teaching and preaching the good word of the Lord, in conjunction with many others also, that were prophets and teachers (Acts xiii. 1.), who, perceiving the readiness which there was in the people to receive the gospel, were gladly employed in dispensing it.

And after they had continued some consider-able number of days there, Paul, whose active spirit was ever forming some new scheme for the advancement of the Christian cause, said to Barnabas his beloved associate, Let us return and visit our brethren in all the cities where we have been.

* Continued at Antioch.* It is generally thought that during this time Peter came to Antioch, and, after having for some time conversed freely with the Gentile Christians, changed his behaviour towards them on the arrival of some Jewish zealots from Jerusalem, according to the account we have, Gal. ii. 11, & seq. which, if the first verse of that chapter refer to the journey to the council described above, seems indeed to have been the case. Nor do I think that visit can be referred to Paul's second journey to Jerusalem after his conversion, Acts xi. 30, though Barnabas also attended him then, because it was not till after that journey, that the gospel of the uncircumcision was so solemnly committed to him: (Acts xiii. 2, 3.) which the apostles at Jerusalem acknowledged it to have been at the time spoken of, Gal. ii. 7—9. If it be asked, why Paul in his rebuke to Peter did not cut short all farther arguments, by referring roundly to the Jerusalem decree if then made? I answer, he might perhaps do it, though not in that part of his speech, which he mentions in the epistle to the Galatians; yet even there he refers to what Peter himself had laid down as the foundation of that decree: (Compare Gal ii. 16—18, with Acts xv. 1.) And it likewise seems to be intimated, that Peter had gone farther in his confessions, than the Jerusalenm decree extended its decision, not only in receiving the Gentile Christians into the church-communion, or admitting them to converse with him, but living after their manner, as if he had himself been without the law; (as Paul himself in proper circumstances used also to do, 1 Cor. ix. 19—22.) yet afterwards assembling his council, as being solicitous to make a secret of it; whereas Paul, though just at the crisis of the Jerusalem decree he had thought it his duty to keep on the reserve, and wave a declaration of his sentiments on this head, lest unnecessary debates, as to the obligation on believing Jews to observe the Mosaic ceremonies, were in conscience to be avoided, but that even to the Jews themselves they were indifferent, any farther than as the peace and edification of others were concerned." I hope the reader will excuse my digressing to clear up this great difficulty here, which I have not seen elsewhere stated in what I think the fairest light, especially since it is so uncertain, whether I may live to publish the remainder of this Exposition on the Epistle.
been, and in which we have preached the word of the Lord, [that we may enquire] how they do, and see what is the state of religion among them. And Barnabas was heartily willing to fall in with the proposal; yet, notwithstanding what had happened in their former progress, he was so far influenced by his particular affection to his nephew, that he advised to take along with them John, surnamed Mark, who had set out with them before. (Chap. xiii. 5.) But Paul accounted him not worthy of that honour, and did not think it by any means proper to take with them that person, who, on some consideration or another which seemed to him not very honourable, had withdrawn himself from them, returning back from Pamphylia, as was related above, (chap. xiii. 13.) and went not with them to the performance of that work, into the effects of which they were now going to enquire.

This was an affair not easy to be accommodated, as each insisted on his own scheme and reasons; there was therefore on the whole a sharp fit of anger between them, so that they at last separated from each other: And Barnabas taking Mark along with him, sailed to his native country of Cyprus, where the Roman proconsul Sergius Paulus had some time since been converted, and Elymas the sorcerer had been struck with blindness. (Sect. 28.) But Paul made choice of his faithful friend Silas for the companion of his travels, and departed from Antioch, being, as before, (chap. xiii. 3.) commended to the grace and blessing of God by the brethren there. And he went through Syria and Cilicia, which was his native country, confirming and establishing the churches which had been planted in those parts, in their adherence to the Christian faith; and so proceeded on ed the word of the Lord, and see how they do.

And Barnabas determined to take with them John, whose surname was Mark.

But Paul thought not good to take him with them, who departed from them from Pamphylia, and went not with them to the work.

And the contention was so sharp between them, that they departed asunder one from the other; and so Barnabas took Mark, and sailed unto Cyprus;

But Paul chose Silas, and departed, being recommended by the brethren unto the grace of God.

And he went through Syria, and Cilicia, confirming the churches.

A sharp fit of anger.] So the word properly signifies, being a medical term. Yet, if I had rendered it by the English word derived from it, I fear it would have been unintelligible to many readers.

c They separated from each other.] Yet it appears, not only that Paul and Barnabas were afterwards thoroughly reconciled; (compare 1 Cor. ix. 6; Gal. ii. 2) but also, that John was taken into Paul's favour again, and admitted by him as a companion into his labours. (Compare Col. iv. 10; Philem. ver. 24; 2 Tim. iv. 11.) It is probable, the exhortations of Barnabas, might concur, with these resentments of Paul, to recover him from his former indolent and timorous disposition. See note on Acts xii. 25, p. 88.

a Confirming the churches.] Mr. Cradock (in his Apol. Hist. p. 92.) and many others think, that Paul sailed from Cilicia to Crete at this time, and, returning to the Asiatic Continent quickly after, left Titus to perfect the settlement of the church there; (Tit. i. 5) which, if he did, might lead us to suppose his Epistle to Titus one of the first he wrote; but I may elsewhere give my reasons, why I cannot be of this opinion.
Reflections on the difference between Paul and Barnabas.

on to Lycaonia, Phrygia, Galatia, Mysia, and
other more distant parts, in the manner and
with the circumstances which will be related
hereafter.

IMPROVEMENT.

How happy an office had these good men, to go about from Verse
one place to another, comforting and confirming the souls of their
brethren wherever they came: They had their present reward
in the pleasure of it, and are now also reaping in the heavenly
world the fruits of their labour of love. Deliver us, O thou
Father of mercies, from lording it over thine heritage, and over-
bearing the consciences and liberties of our brethren, with what-
ever secular advantages it might be attended; and give us to taste
at least something of the generous pleasure of these faithful
messengers, though it should be with all their labour and persecu-
tions.

While we endeavour to comfort, may we be also ready to ex.
hort and quicken one another: May Christians animate each
other in the work and warfare to which they are called; and
may ministers remember, how great a part of their work consists
in practical addresses, to which like Judas and Silas in the instance
before us, they should choose to digress, rather than entirely omit
them.

None can wonder that Paul and Barnabas were desirous to visit
the churches they had planted; for it is natural for those who have
been spiritual fathers to have a peculiar affection for their offspring,
as it also is for the children which God hath given them to honour
and love those who (as the apostle expresses it) have begotten them
in Christ Jesus (1 Cor. iv. 15.) Happy is it indeed when the visits
of ministers, animated by such a spirit, are improved to the bless-
sed purposes of advancing the work which divine grace has already
begun, and of addressing cautions as well as encouragements with
such affection, wisdom, and zeal, that it may finally appear, they
have not run in vain, nor laboured in vain. (Phil. ii. 16.)

It is with sensible regret that we read of any difference, and much
more of a sharp contention arising between Paul and Barnabas, so
dear to each other in the bonds both of human and Christian
friendship: But we see it arose to some degree of severity, in con-
sequence of a remainder of imperfection in the temper of the one
or the other, yea, probably of both; they separated therefore, but
it plainly appears that they did not become enemies: They preached
the same gospel, though in different companies, each taking his
proper circuit; and thus the work of the Lord was performed with
greater dispatch, and perhaps with greater success, while Mark,
who
Paul and Silas go to Derbe and Lystra, where they find Timothy.

SECT. XXXV.

who afterwards appears, as well as Barnabas, to have been restored to the intimate friendship of Paul, was, on the one hand, endeavouring to shew that Barnabas had not chosen an unworthy associate; and, on the other hand, Silas, the fellow-labourer and fellow-sufferer of Paul, would take care to behave in such a manner, that this great apostle might have no reason to repent of the preference which he had given to him.

41 To conclude, we see that both Barnabas and Paul go to their native country: Some peculiar affection to it, when it is not injurious to the general happiness of mankind, is natural and allowable; and it is certain we cannot shew our love to it in any nobler and more important instance, than by endeavouring to promote the progress and success of the gospel in it.

SECT. XXXVI.

Acts XVI. 1.

WHEN Paul set out with Silas on his journey, it was observed before that he went through the regions of Syria and Cilicia, confirming the churches; and passing on from thence he came to Derbe and Lystra, where he had preached the gospel in his former progress. And while he was at Lystra, behold a certain disciple was there, whose name was Timothy, the son of one Eunice, a believing Jewess, but of a Grecian father; and we mention it as a circumstance worthy of note, because he afterwards became a very considerable person in the church, as well as a faithful and useful friend to the apostle. He was an eminently serious and devout young man, who was remarkable for his early piety, having been trained up by his good mother, and his grandmother, whose name was Lois, in an acquaintance with the holy scriptures from his childhood; (2 Tim. i. 5. iii. 15.) and, upon the whole, was one who had an honourable character given him by all the brethren in Lystra and Iconium. Him therefore Paul who had before contracted some intimacy of acquaintance with him, (2 Tim. iii. 10, 11.) determined he would have to attend him in his progress,
Paul circumcises Timothy, and takes him with them.

And as they went through the cities, they delivered them the decrees for to keep, that were ordained of the apostles.

And circumcised him.] In order to judge rightly of Paul's conduct in this affair, which some have censured, (as they do other things in Christianity,) because they did not understand it, we must recollect, that he always openly owned, "that the Gentiles were free from the yoke of the Mosaic ceremonies, and that the Jews were not to expect salvation by them;" and he also taught, "that they were not in conscience obliged to observe them at all, except in cases where the omission of them would give offence." But, because his enemies represented him as teaching people to despise the law of Moses, and even as blasphemying it, he therefore took some opportunities of conforming to it publicly himself, to shew how far he was from condemning it as evil; an evangelist, into which some Christian heretics early ran, and with which the apostle himself has been most unjustly charged of late by a writer too contemptible to be named. This is the true key to his conduct here, and Acts xvi. 21—24. And though, when the Jewish zealots would have imposed upon him to compel Titus, who was a Greek, to be circumcised, even while he was at Jerusalem, he resolutely refused it; (Gal. ii. 5—8;) yet here he voluntarily persuaded Timothy to submit to that rite, knowing the omission of it in him, who was a Jew by the mother's side, would have given offence; and being the more desirous to obviate any prejudices against this excellent youth, whose early acquaintance with the Scriptures of the Old Testament (2 Tim. iii. 15,) might render him peculiarly capable of preaching in the synagogues with advantage, which, had he been uncircumcised, would not have been permitted.—Grotius, observes, this was probably the beginning of Luke's acquaintance with Timothy, though Paul knew him long before. See note a, § 32, p. 118.

b They delivered—the decrees.] The author
a rule for their direction, by the apostles and elders that were assembled lately in full council at Jerusalem. The several churches therefore where they came, being watered by such faithful labourers, and encouraged with so favourable a decision of the grand point in question, were much confirmed in their adherence to the Christian faith, and increased more and more in number daily.

6 And with such views and such success they cheerfully pursued their journey, and went through Phrygia and the region of Galatia, which had never before been visited with the light of the gospel, as the provinces before-mentioned had been; and in their travels through Galatia they were received with such peculiar affection, as if an angel from heaven, or Jesus Christ himself had come among them; and such readiness was shewn to hear the word, that they made a considerable number of most zealous converts. (Compare Gal. iv. 14, 15.) [And] after this, being forbidden by the Holy Spirit (who at that time had other work for them to do,) to preach the word in that part of the country which is called the proconsular Asia in which Colossae, 7 Laodicea, and some other cities lay; When they were come to Mysia, which was the most western province of the Lesser Assia, and lay on the

author of Miscell. Sacra. (Essay IV. p. 84,) first taking it for granted, that the decree was particularly intended for the churches of Syria and Cilicia, and not for any converts from the idolatrous Gentiles, would have this verse and the next transposed to the conclusion of the foregoing chapter, or the three intermediate verses that begin this chapter inclosed in a parenthesis. But it is plain from the contents of that decree, that it was intended for all Gentile Christians living among Jews; and it appears from the preceding story, that great numbers of Jews were to be found in Derbe, Lystra, Iconium, and the neighbouring places; and therefore, as the transposition would be most unwarrantable, the parenthesis is quite unnecessary, and would pervert the sense. — Mr. L'Enfant observes, that the word ἐγγυμένου, which is here used to express decree, always signifies something temporary and ceremonial, and not laws of perpetual and universal obligation. Compare Eph. ii. 15; Col. ii. 14.

Forbidden to preach in that—called the Proconsular Asia.] As all the places mentioned in the former verses lay in Asia Minor, it is evident that the word Asia must be thus explained. It is also apparent, that flourishing churches were afterwards planted there, particularly at Colossae, Laodicea, Sardis, Thyatira, and Philadelphia: So that it seems to have been the determination of Providence, that instead of going through this region now by such a leisurely progress as that, in which they proceeded in their former journey through Pamphylia, Pisidia, Lycaonia, &c. they should hasten to Europe directly, and preach the gospel first in Philippi, which was a Roman colony, and then in the neighbouring parts; while in the mean time the Asian provinces, now passed over, might hear some report of it from their neighbours, and so be prepared to receive with greater advantage the labours of the apostles, when they should return to them, as Paul afterwards did. (Chap. xviii. 23, & seq.) By this means the spread of the gospel would in any given time be wider, than (other circumstances being equal,) it would have been, had they taken all the interjacent places in their way.
but but See for Jnd There is assuredly and Cor. 4:10 Then and I Cor. 16:10}

8 And they passing by Mysia, came down to Troas.

9 And a vision appeared to Paul in the night. There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us.

10 And after he had seen the vision, immediately we endeavoured to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the gospel unto them.

The Spirit of Jesus. So many ancient versions, readings, and citations, add the words [of Jesus] that I thought myself not only authorised, but obliged, at least to insert them thus, and perhaps might well have omitted the crotches. See Beza and Dr. Mills in loc.

A certain Macedonian. Some think, Paul knew his country by his dress or language, or by his naming it, as we find he did. Yet perhaps the word πόλις may intimate, that it was some particular person whom Paul knew; for which reason I render it literally, and wonder that Gro- tius should explain it, as if it were the guardian angel of Macedonia that now appeared.

We immediately endeavoured, &c. This is the first place, in which Luke intimates his attending on the apostles; and it is very remarkable, that here he does it in an oblique manner; nor does he indeed, throughout the whole history, once mention his own name, or relate any one thing which he said or did for the service of Christianity, though Paul speaks of him in most honourable terms, Col. iv. 14; 2 Tim. iv. 11; and probably 2 Cor. viii. 18, as the brother, whose praise in the gospel went through all the churches.—The same remark may be made on the rest of the sacred historians, who every one of them shew the like amiable modesty; nor is the charming story, St. John tells of himself, (John xxi. 20, & seq.) by any means an exception: See note on that passage, Vol. II. p. 476. And when Paul speaks of his own services, it is by no means in an ostentatious way, but in his own necessary vindication, appealing to his enemies for the known truth of them. By which means Providence has so ordered it, that the memory of many important facts which would otherwise have been lost, should be preserved; and preserved in such a manner, as to carry the strongest evidence
that the Lord Jesus himself called us to preach the gospel to them. Setting sail therefore from Troas, with the advantage of a strong easterly wind, we ran directly to the island of Samothrace, which lies near the Hellespont; and having thus dispatched the larger part of our little voyage, we came the next day to the celebrated port of Neapolis, on the Thracian shore, near the borders of Macedonia: And landing there, we came from thence to Philippi, which is a city of the first part of Macedonia; for it is well known, that the province is divided into four parts, [and] this is a Roman colony; And we continued in this city for some days, and met with several remarkable occurrences, which we shall relate in the next section.

IMPROVEMENT.

Let us with pleasure observe the prudent condescension of the apostle Paul, in becoming all things to all men; and particularly to the Jews as a Jew, that he might gain the Jews; (1 Cor. ix. 20,) for this purpose circumcising his companion Timothy, that he might give them no unnecessary offence: Nor was the condescension and zeal of this pious youth to be less esteemed, who was willing to submit, not only to that painful rite, but to all the yoke of ceremonial observances to which he was obliged by it, in a view to usefulness in the church: Well may it expect eminent service from those ministers of the rising generation, that set out with such a spirit; while, on the other hand, when a fierce and haughty sense of liberty is the reigning, darling character, and a determination is formed to submit in nothing, to oblige in nothing, as the first elements of the Christian temper seem as yet to be unknown.

evidence along with them. Such instances of divine wisdom, occurring in Scripture, are worthy our attentive observation, and our thankful acknowledgment.

As Amphipolis is mentioned by Livy, (lib. xlvi. cap. 29,) as the chief city of this first region of Macedonia, in which Philippi lay, I choose with Mr. Pierce (Pref. to his Notes on Phil.) to follow the Syracosian also does, reading πολις instead of πολις, though it be true, as Mr. Biscoe well observes, (Chap. x. § 2, p. 567, 568,) that Amphipolis was then on the decline. Raphelius (see Horod. p. 573,) supposes it may signify only, it was the first city they met with in their journey; but the authorities he produces seem by no means satisfactory. Grothus explains it of the first city that was a colony.

A colony.] Luke by using a word originally Latin, νόμωσα, instead of the correspondent Greek word, πολις, plainly intimates it was a Roman colony, which ver. 21 certainly proves it to have been; and, though the cities were long puzzled to find any mention of it in that view, some come (dug up. I think, within the last century,) show that a colony was planted there by Julius Caesar, and afterwards much augmented by Augustus. See Spanheim, de Univ. & Præst. Numism. Diss. ii. p. 105, 106, and Dr. Benson, Vol. ii. p. 14.
Reflections on the direction under which they travelled.

unknown, there is great reason to believe, that the doctrines and precepts of the gospel will not, cannot be successfully taught; a great reason to fear, that such instructors will have their reward in the empty applauses which they give to themselves, and each other; while they brand those who are solicitous to become wise that they may win souls, with reproaches which God will remember in the day when he shall judge the secrets of all hearts; and will find many of them far different from what such rash men have presumed to pronounce them.

Indefatigable were the journeys and labours of these ambassadors of Christ: they travelled through wide extended regions, and sowed the seeds of knowledge and of life wherever they came, and God gave the increase. But the œconomy of Divine providence was very remarkable, in not permitting them to preach in Bithynia, and forbidding them to do it in Asia: What were the particular reasons of this determination we know not: perhaps the inhabitants of these places were remarkably conceited of their own wisdom; perhaps they had treated the flying reports of the gospel with contempt; or, possibly, without any particular displeasure against them, their visitation might be delayed in a view to more general good. But happy was it for for Galatia, Phrygia, and the neighbouring parts that they were not included in the prohibition! And happy is it for this sinful land of ours, that the abused insulted gospel, is not taken away, and that its ministers are not one way or another forbidden to repeat those offers which have so long been rejected and despised.

The visit of a Macedonian imploring the help of the apostle, was justly regarded by him and his associates as an intimation of the divine pleasure that they should pass over thither. And surely did those nations of the earth, that have not yet received the gospel, know in the general how great a blessing it is, instead of opposing those messengers of it who might offer to spread it among them, they would rather in the most pressing manner urge and intreat their presence, and with the greatest joy sit down at their feet. May they who are entrusted with this glorious embassy imitate the pious zeal of these holy men, and be willing, when called by providence, to cross lands and seas on so pious and so charitable an errand.
SECT. XXXVII.

Paul and Silas preach the gospel at Philippi, but some of the inhabitants, provoked at their casting out a spirit of divination from a damsel there, rise tumultuously upon them, scourge them, and cast them into prison. The jailor is awakened by an earthquake, and converted by the preaching of Paul. Acts XVI. 13—34.


IT was observed in the close of the preceding section, that Paul and Silas in company with Timothy and Luke, the penman of this history, arrived at Philippi, and made some stay there. And now we go on to relate, that on the sabbath-day we went out of the city to the side of the river Strymon, where, according to the custom of the Jews, there was an oratory or a place of public prayer; and sitting down, when the devotions were over, we spake to the women that were assembled there, for most of the congregation were of that sex.

14 And a certain woman, named Lydia, a seller of purple, who was a native of the city of Thyatira in Asia, and a devout worshipper of the true God after the Jewish manner, was present at that time and heard the [discourse ;] whose heart the Lord opened, by the secret and gentle influences of his grace, to attend in such a manner to the things which were spoken by Paul, as to be effectually wrought upon and converted by them.

15 And when she was baptized with her family, she earnestly intreated us, saying, If you have judged me recede from the version I have given before, Luke vi. 12, (see note b on that text, Vol. I. p. 280) and with pleasure refer my reader to the admirable critic mentioned above, for the abundant vindication of it, and for a beautiful explication of the phrase jurare per Anchialum, which he supposes to refer to this Jewish custom. (See Elsner Observ. Vol. I. p. 430—434, and Dr. Lardner's Credib. Book I. chap. 3, § 9, Vol. I. p. 253—240.) I have chosen the word oratory, rather than praesucha, as more familiar to an English ear, and refer my reader to Philo, Oper. p. 770, 755, and 760, to Dr. Hammond and Drusius in loc. to Dr. Benson's History, Vol. II. p. 85, 86, and especially to Dr. Prideaux's Connect. Vol. I. p. 387—389, for a farther account of these places.


And on the sabbath we went out of the city by a river side, where prayer was wont to be made; and we sat down and spake unto the women which resorted thither.

14 And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul.

15 And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought us,
A damsel is dispossessed of a spirit of divination.

16 And it came to pass, as we went to prayer, a certain damsel, possessed with a spirit of divination, met us, which brought her masters much gain by soothsaying:

17 The same followed Paul and us, and cried, saying, These men are the servants of the most high God, which shew unto us the way of salvation.

18 And this she did many days. But Paul, being grieved, turned and said to the spirit, I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her. And it came out that same hour.

b A certain girl who had a Pythonic spirit.] As Plutarch (De D. fest. Orat. p. 414,) tells us, those who were inspired with this spirit were τεκτόνες ήμών, or spake as seeming to send their voice from their bellies, and Galen mentions the same fact, some late writers have supposed, the whole pretence to such inspiration to have been founded on the art of throwing out the voice in some extraordinary manner, which has been practised by some of late among ourselves, and that all the cure wrought by the apostle was only discovering the cheat, and disabling her from playing this trick any more. (See the Enquiry into the Case of Damocles, p. 54.) And Mr. L'Enfant seems to favour this notion, though he says, in terms of remarkable ambiguity, "it was an imposture which must be the work of a malignant spirit," as also Dr. Benson who calls her "a lunatic person who was reckoned by the people to be possessed," &c. (Hist. Vol. III. p. 87.) But the manner in which Luke relates the story simply implies, that he thought it a real passion, and that Paul took it himself in that view. Nor can I apprehend that her behaviour, or his, or that of her masters afterwards, can be accounted for without allowing it to have been the case. (See Mr. Bisoe at Boyle's Lect. chap. VIII. § 2, p. 294—300. Essay towards vind. lit. Sense of the Daemon, p. 67—70. Further Enquiry p. 81—90. Reply to it, p. 79—82.) It is well known, that the Hebrews call the spirit, with which such persons were supposed to be agitated, ἄνωθεν, because the bodies of those who appeared to be possessed by them were violently dis tended, like leathern bottles full of wine, and ready to burst. Compare Job xxxii. 18, 19.

c Apollo, whom they call Pythius.] This title, it is generally said, was given to Apollo, on account of his having destroyed a monstrous serpent that was called Python: (See Erasmus, Gualterius, and Le Clerc's Supplement to Dr. Hammond in loc.) But it seems rather, that this story of the Python was a fable grounded on his killing one, who for his cruelty was sentenced Python, that is, serpent or dragon, from whence Apollo had the name of Pythius. See Strabo. Geogr. lib. IX. p. 291. Bochart. Hieroz. Part II. lib. 3 cap. 5. and Mr. Bisoe, as above, chap. VIII. § 2, p. 294.
sion that this statagem of Satan might lead the people to imagine, that the preachers of the gospel acted in a confederacy with the evil spirit, to whom the heathen worship was addressed, turned towards the damsel, who was then very near him, and said to the evil spirit by whose emotion she spake, I charge thee, O thou invisible power, under whose influence this unhappy creature is, in the name of Jesus Christ whose gospel I preach, to go out of her immediately. And it went out that very hour, so that she had never such kind of supernatural agitations any more, nor pretended to any gift of prophecy for the future.

19 But when her owners saw that the hope of their gain was gone out with the evil spirit, laying hold of Paul and Silas, whom they looked upon as much more considerable than Timothy, and Luke, the two evangelists that attended them, they dragged them away to the market place, to accuse them to the magistrates, who held their court there. And having brought them thither to the officers intrusted with the government of the city by the Romans, they charged them as disturbers of the peace, and introducers of a new religion that was inconsistent with the laws, and said, These men being Jews, disturb our city, in an insufferable manner, and take upon them in an unwarrantable way to teach customs which it is not lawful for us, as we are Romans, to receive and observe; being such as would lead us to renounce the gods of our country, and to abstain from many things which the laws of Rome require. And the populace rose up together against them, and joined the cry, as if they command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her. And he came out the same hour.

19 And when her masters saw that the hope of their gain was gone, they caught Paul and Silas, and drew them into the marketplace, unto the rulers.

20 And brought them to the magistrates, saying, These men, being Jews, do exceedingly trouble our city.

21 And teach customs which are not lawful for us to receive, neither to observe, being Romans.

22 And the multitude rose up together against

1 To the magistrates.] Though the Syriac and Arabic Versions omit those words, the most authentic critics insert them. These magistrates are here called δικασται, and afterwards ἐξευτελοῦσιν; the latter of which words the Greeks used to denote Roman pratois; and if it were applied to the duumviri, who were the governors of colonies, it was by way of compliment: But Mr. Biscoe has well proved, there are examples of such an application. Boyle's Lect. chap. ix. § 3, p. 346.

c Teach customs, which it is not lawful, &c.] The masters of this girl had not only lost all the gain they might have made by her practice of the arts she professed, but likewise what they might have sold her for, in consequence of those extraordinary qualities which were now ceased. Yet as the laws made no provision for an event of this kind, they thought it proper to ground their accusation on an attempt to introduce a new religion, which was indeed forbidden by the Roman Law, (Cicero de Leg. lib. ii. cap. 8, 10, 11, 27; Liv. lib. xxxix. cap. 16; Sueton. August. cap. 93,) though every one was tolerated in worshiping what deities he pleased at home. (See Mr. Biscoe, chap. ix. § 3, p. 334 Grotius, and Dr. Whitby in loc.) The conquered provinces were left at full liberty in this respect; yet, and the Romans themselves were sometimes severely punished, by their generals or other magistrates, for insulting places, or rites, or even animals accounted sacred.

f And
they had been guilty of the worst of crimes: And upon this the officers, without any legal trial, immediately gave orders that they should be punished; and violently tearing off their garments in a shameful way, commanded them to be beaten with rods by the hands of the factors, or public beadle, to whom that office belonged. (Compare 1 Thess. ii. 2. and 2 Cor. xi. 23, 25.)

And when they had severely scourged and laid many stripes upon them, the officers were so incensed against them, that they cast them into prison, charging the jailor to keep them safely.

Who having received such a charge, thrust them into the inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks.

And at midnight Paul and Silas, prayed, and sang praises unto God: And the prisoners heard them.

And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the very cippi, or large pieces of wood, used among the Romans, which not only loaded the less of prisoners, but sometimes distended them in a very painful manner. (See Grotius in loc. Mr. Biscoe. chap. ix. § 4. p. 347. Grotius and Dr. Whiteby in loc.) De Dieu shews from the Mishna, that it was also practised among the Jews; but that was not regarded in the present case.
The jailor is awakened by an earthquake.

very foundation of the prison was shaken; God
thereby testifying his gracious regard to them,
as the faithful ambassadors of his Son, who for
his sake were used in so outrageous a manner;
and immediately by the force of the earthquake
all the doors were opened, and the bonds of all
the prisoners were at the same moment miracu-
lously loosened, yet their spirits were impressed
with such astonishment that none of them at-
ttempted to flee away.

And the jailor awakening out of his sleep upon
this violent concussion of the earth, and seeing
the doors of the prison opened, was in such con-
sternation that he drew his sword, and was going
to kill himself;[a] naturally supposing, that the
prisoners, embracing so favourable an opportu-
nity, were fled, and fearing lest their escape
should be imputed to his connivance and treachery, and he should be proceeded against
with the utmost severity, and be brought out to
a painful and ignominious execution.

But Paul, being aware of that horrid act
which his rashness intended, and anxious to
prevent it, cried out with a loud voice, and with
the utmost earnestness, saying, Stay thy despe-
rate hand, and do thyself no harm: for we are
all here, and none of us shall take the opportu-
nity of escaping, while the hand of God is work-
ing thus awfully around us.

And upon this he called for lights,[b] and
eagerly sprang in with a violent and impetuous
motion; and being in a perfect tremor, he fell
down with the humblest reverence before the feet
of Paul and Silas, and lay a few moments in
speechless

[a] There was a great earthquake—the doors were opened,—and the bands loosened. Elstier has most happily shown, in his notes on this text, (Observ. Vol. 1. p. 441—444) that each of these three things was esteemed, even by the Pagans, a token of some divine appearance in favour of the oppressed and afflicted, who suffered wrongfully, and were dear to them.

[b] Draw his sword and was going to kill himself. Though it is true, that some of the philosophers condemned self-murder, yet it was not only justifiable by many others, (see Gravis in loc. and Mr. Baxter, chap. ix. § 6. p. 346;) but had in fact prevailed much among the Pagans, especially about that time, and had, in the memory of some then living, been (as it were) digested at Philippi by the example of those great men, Brutus and Cassius among others, who fell on their own swords there.

1 Paul, being aware of that horrid act, &c.] As they were all at present in the dark, it is not easy to say, how Paul knew of the jailor's purpose, unless, it were by hearing some despair words that declared it, or by some immediate suggestion from God, which amidst such a scene of wonders is by no means incredible.

[c] He called for lights.] As φανθα is the plural number, it seems to imply, that on this alarm several of his attendants came with torches, and were present at the en-
quiry which immediately followed; nor did he in the least scruple to throw him-
sel down, before all his domesties, at the feet of these his holy prisoners, who were so evidently honoured by the God of na-
ture.

What
He is converted by the preaching of Paul.

50 And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved?

51 And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.

52 And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house.

53 And he took them the speechless consternation and confusion: And then, in the most respectful manner bringing them out from the inner prison in which they were confined, he said, O sirs, what must I do that I may be saved; for I see nothing but danger and misery, both temporal and spiritual surrounding me?

And they said to him answering together as 31 with one voice, Believe in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ; whom it is our office to preach as the great and only Saviour, and humbly commit thyself to his almighty protection, and thou shalt be saved from every evil, and thine house too, if they also believe. And as he discovered a most humble desire to be farther instructed in the faith which they taught, they readily embraced the happy opportunity, and spake to him and to all that were in his house, the word of the Lord, declaring the contents and purport of the gospel.

And the word came with such a power, that his doubt, the Spirit of God added conviction and energy to all.

To believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.] To believe in Christ does undoubtedly in its primary signification imply, trusting in him, or committing ourselves to his protection, as I have here paraphrased it, (See Dr. Watts's Harmony of all Relig. chap. viii. p. 65.) In this connection it would immediately imply, submitting to the farther instructions of these his special ambassadors, and authorized messengers; and it always includes a desire to be delivered from the power of sin, and a disposition to comply with his scheme of salvation, which is to purify to himself a peculiar people zealous of good works: The full import of which scheme Paul and Silas would not fail to open to this new convert as soon as possible; and accordingly it is presently added, that they spake to him the word of the Lord.

Thou shalt be saved and thine house.] The meaning cannot be, that the eternal salvation of his family could be secured by his faith, but that his believing in Christ, would be the best security of his family from present danger, and that, if they also themselves believed, they would be entitled to the same spiritual and everlasting blessings with himself; which Paul might the rather add, as it is probable, that many of them, under this terrible alarm, might have attended the master of the family into the dungeon.
his rough heart was melted at these gracious tidings, and the tenderness of it immediately flowed forth toward these messengers of them, so that taking them that very hour of the night, he washed their stripes, which still remained unhealed, and was immediately baptized, himself and all his domestics with him. And having brought them into his house, after this solemn rite had been performed, he spread the table before them with the best provisions he had at hand; and believing in God with all his house, he was even transported with unutterable joy, at the sudden light which had sprung in upon him, and at the happy prospects which were by divine grace presented to his view as a Christian.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. We see remarkably in this period by what various methods divine grace operates upon different persons. As for Lydia, she was touched by a gentle influence, descending upon her like dew from heaven; her heart was melted under the word, as snow by the sun, and by the soft, yet powerful hand of our blessed Saviour, was made willing and obedient. But when the Lord came to subdue the stubborn heart of the savage jailor, who seems to have taken a barbarous pleasure in afflicting his pious prisoners, he came in the whirlwind, the tempest, and the fire. (1 Kings xix. 26, 27 11, 12.) His soul, as well as his house, was shaken with an earthquake, and the foundations as it were laid bare. A sudden transition of astonishment convinces him of his extreme danger. His hand is mercifully stopped in that terrible moment in which he was rushing on to seek a refuge in hell from the seeming dangers of earth; and being taught by a secret grace which he had not as yet been instructed to seek, he falls down before Paul and Silas, honouring frustrated many of those noble purposes in providence, which their sufferings answered, and would have introduced many inconveniences, which an intelligent reader will easily apprehend from this general hint.

* He washed their stripes, which still remained unhealed.] I mention this circumstance, as it serves to show, what I have elsewhere observed, (and it is of great importance to remember it,) that the apostles had not a power of working miraculous cures whenever they pleased; no, not even on their own bodies, or those of their dearest friends. (See note d, § 17. p. 22.) Had they possessed such a power, it would have been their duty to have used it, unless they had, (as Christ with such a power in fact had,) a discovery of the divine will, that in such or such instances the use of it should be waived. On the other hand, the continual use of such a power would have

34 And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God, with all his house.
honouring them as among the first of mankind, whom he had just before treated, not only as slaves, but the worst of villains; yet he is now ready to receive the law and the gospel from their mouth, seeking the way of salvation from them, and declaring his readiness to submit to whatsoever they should tell him.

What unutterable delight must it afford to these afflicted servants of Christ, when they saw this astonishing change! Surely it appeared that their prayers and their praises came up in remembrance before God. They had, with a serene conscience and a joyful heart, been singing praises to God in the midst, and behold, new matter of praise is given them, and in the midst of all their sufferings new songs are put into their mouth, and new occasions for thanksgiving pour in upon them. Those bonds which, however ponderous in themselves, sat so light upon them, are now miraculously loosened; and the far more infamous and dangerous bonds which Satan had fastened upon these sons of persecution and violence, fall off too. The awakened jailor asks the question of all others the most important, and asks it with an earnestness and respect that witnesses its sincerity, Sirs, what must I do to be saved?

Gracious God, to whose efficacious influence the most obdurate heart must submit, awakened multitudes who, like this once wretched sinner, but now beloved and triumphant saint, are insensible of their danger and misery; that seeing themselves perishing, they may enquire after salvation! and may it please thee, to put a faithful word into the mouth of thy ministers, that they may all join in directing such awakened souls to believe in Christ, and trust to him for salvation! When they are brought to this they may well rejoice; and however their hearts may be enlarged towards those who have been the instruments of this blessed change, none of the effects of their tenderness or generosity can afford a pleasure comparable to that, which they shall find in the consciousness of having rescued souls from eternal death, and conducted them into the way of salvation.

SECT. XXXVIII.

Paul and Silas are honourably dismissed from their confinement by the Magistrates of Philippi, on insisting upon their privilege as Romans; and leave that city, after visiting the new converts there. Acts XVI. 35, to the end.

Acts XVI. 35.

And when it was a day, the magistrates

Thus Paul and Silas spent the remainder

of the night in the house of the jailor,

sharing and increasing that joy which he found

in the way of salvation.

K 3
on the admission of the gospel into his heart. And when it was day the Praetorian magistrates of Philippi, who were terrified by the earthquake, sent the lictors or beadles by whom they had been scourged the day before, to the keeper of the prison, saying dismiss those men with the custody of whom thou wast yesterday charged; for this correction and confinement is all the punishment we shall inflict upon them. And the keeper of the prison told these things to Paul, saying, The prætors, our chief magistrates here, have sent orders that you may be dismissed, and I inform you of it with great satisfaction: Now therefore you are at full liberty to go out whenever you please, and may pursue your journey in peace, sure of our earnest prayers that all prosperity and happiness may attend you, wherever you carry those good tidings which have been so comfortable to us.

But Paul judged it proper to animadvert on the manner in which they had been used, and therefore called for the beadles, and said to them, As for these magistrates from whom you come, they have beaten us who are Romans and free citizens as well as themselves; and this they have done publicly in the most ignominious manner, as if we had been common slaves, though we had never any legal trial, [and] were uncondemned of any crime at all; and after this they have

* Were terrified by the earthquake.] Two ancient manuscripts mention this circumstance; and it is in itself very probable, separate from their authority.

b The lictors or beadles.] Perhaps the word is not a simple one, Græce, which Græcius would have to be retained in its Greek form, might have been rendered robber, most agreeable to its etymology; but, as such officers only bear a little sword, or something resembling one, and the Roman lictors had a large bundle of them tied together, I thought the word beadles, as it is also the name of the officers by whom offenders among us are generally whipped, would present to an English reader the most genuine idea.

c They have beaten us who are Romans.] It is well known, that the Valerian law forbade, that a Roman citizen should be bound, and the Schoriamon, that he should be beaten with rods. (See Dr. Lardner's Credibility. Book I. ch. 3, 4, Vol. I. p. 498-500.) If it be asked, Why Paul and Silas, who had the same immunity, did not plead this privilege before? I must answer with Mr. Boyle, That the hurry and noise of the execution prevented it; and perhaps amidst such a tumult it might be apprehended, that the people would have murdered them, if they had not been in some measure appeased by their sufferings; not to say, how possible it is, that the plea if made might not be regarded amidst such a riotous mob. The circumstances of Paul, when he pleaded it, Acts xxii. 23, were much different.—If he be further asked, Why it was now so soon admitted? It may be replied, not only that it was an extremely hazardous thing to make such a claim falsely, (for Claudius punished it with death; Sueton. Claud. cap. 25,) but also, that there was a certain dignity in the manner in which Paul made his plea, which added a sensible credibility to it, especially as they had now no further sufferings to apprehend, and as the earthquake which might perhaps affect the whole city, seemed to have so evident a reference to their case. See Mr. Bishop at Boyle's Let. chap. ix. § 7, p. 256, & seq. d Let
Paul insists upon their privileges as Romans.

have cast us into the common prison: And do they now think to thrust us out of the city privately? By no means; it is not at all fit that magistrates should be encouraged in such oppressive and arbitrary proceedings as these, which may be so injurious to the most innocent and worthy citizens, whenever a popular cry is raised against them: They cannot but know, that this their illegal proceeding hath given us a great advantage against them, if we were disposed to prosecute them to the utmost, according to the Roman law; if therefore they desire to accommodate the matter let them at least come themselves, and conduct us respectfully out of this place of confinement, into which we have been so unjustly thrown, and thus let them make the best amends they can to our reputation and character, after having irreparably injured us in our persons.

And the beadle reported these words to the praetors, who (as we observed above) were the magistrates from whom they came: And when they heard that they were Romans, they were afraid, well knowing, that even to have torn the garments of a citizen, and much more to have scourged him, especially thus publicly, and without hearing his defence, was a crime which might have exposed them to very high penalties, if the person injured had entered a complaint against them in the legal forms.

And they came therefore in their own persons to the prison where Paul and Silas were, and comforted them in the best manner they could, acknowledging their innocence, and commending the patience and fortitude with which they had borne the punishment so rashly inflicted upon them: And conducting them out with the most respectful treatment, they requested that

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38 And the serjeants told these words unto the magistrates; and they feared, when they heard that they were Romans.

39 And they came and besought them, and brought them out, and

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a Let them come themselves, and conduct us out.) In all this Paul seems to have had a regard to the honour and interest of Christianity in this place, as well as to their own civil rights, as men and Romans; for such a token of public respect from the magistrates would undoubtedly encourage the new converts, and remove a stumbling-block out of the way of others, who might not have discerned the true lustre of the characters of Paul and Silas amidst so much infamy as they had before suffered.

b Thy came and comforted them.] So our translators render the word καταφέραν, in the next verse, as well as in many other places. Compare Acts xxvii. 12; Rom. i. 13; 2 Cor. i. 3; vii. 5, in all which texts, and many others, it can have no other signification, though in several others it must signify comforted, as it is justly rendered, Acts xi. 21; 1 Thess. ii. 11; Heb. iii. 13, and elsewhere. There are other instances, in which it signifies to entreat, 1 Cor. iv. 15; 1 Tim. v. 1. But I prefer the first sense here, as the latter is expressed in the following clause, and as it gives us an idea of a more respectful treatment, as De Dieu also has hinted.

c They
They visit the brethren, and depart from Philippi.

They would excuse what was past, and would with all convenient speed depart from the city, to prevent any of those popular tumults which might be the consequence of their longer abode there; where perhaps the rage of their former accusers might occasion farther embarrassment, both to the magistrates and to them.

And upon this, coming out of the prison in the honourable manner we have described, they candidly agreed to excuse what had been done in prejudice of their rights; and only entered into [the house of] Lydia, their convert and friend, with whom they had lodged before: And when they had seen the brethren whom they were to leave behind them, they comforted them with an account of what God had done both for them and by them in the prison, and exhorted them to such a steadfast faith and exemplary life, as Christianity always required, and was peculiarly suitable to their present circumstances; and then they departed out of Philippi, and directed their journey westward towards Thessalonica, where they met with new difficulties, which will be related in the following section.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. We have seen Paul and Silas suffering, not for doing evil but good; for great good undoubtedly it was, to cast out the demon which possessed the young woman, of whom we have been reading, and made her an instrument of mischief, though to her mercenary masters a means of gain. Could she indeed have foretold future events, as perhaps she very falsely pretended, it had been a curse rather than a benefit to mankind to know them; but it is exceedingly probable that this evil spirit, being himself unacquainted with them, did, like many of his brethren, only delude

1 They comforted and exhorted them.] I unite the two senses of the word here, as they would, to be sure, mingle on such an occasion consolations and exhortations. Such an extraordinary interposition of God for his suffering servants, and such an addition made to their church, had a natural tendency both to cheer their hearts, and to invigorate their pious resolutions. Accordingly it appears from Paul's Epistle to this church, that there were many excellent Christians among them, who expressed an affection for him, and a zeal for their religion, in some considerable degree correspondent to such encouragements and obligations; Philip. i. 5—7, 29, 30; iv. 10, 14—18.

2 And departed.] Though many circumstances might now have invited their stay at Philippi, they wisely complied with the request of the magistrates, that they might not seem (as Biennius well observes,) to express any degree of obstinacy or revenge, and might give no suspicion of any design to stir up the people to any kind of sedition.
delude his votaries with ambiguous answers, which proved the occa-
sion of false expectations, and numerous inconveniences. At
least, it diverted them from all proper regards to the true God, the Ver.
supreme Disposer of all events, and confirmed them in their un-
happy attachment to those which are by nature no Gods, to those
vain idols, by a regard to whom Satan was honoured, and the liv-
ing Jehovah injured and affronted.

Wisely did Paul, in imitation of his master, refuse applause
from so impure a tongue. Yet with what consistency could these
Heathens persecute him? If this damsel spake under a divine di-
rection, why should she not be credited, when she testified, that
these were servants of the true God, that taught the way of salva-
tion? If they were indeed so, how absurd, how impious, and
how dangerous must it be, to treat them with outrage, instead of
reverence! What an affront to God! What defiance of salvation!
If Apollo was indeed any thing more than an empty name, if he
was judged to have any power and any deity, what regards were
owing to that Jesus of Nazareth, who appeared so much superior,
that Apollo fled at his very name! but the god of this world had
blinded their eyes, and reason and conscience remonstrated in vain,
so long as the hopes of gain lay the opposite way. Deliver us, O
Lord, from such fatal madness, and teach us, how much more
valuable salvation is, than any worldly interest which must be sacri-
ficed to it!

The ministers of Christ, Paul and Silas had been injured in their reputations, and abused in their persons; and in this in-
stance, as in many others, were treated like the filth of the world, and the off-scouring of all things, while the plowers plowed upon their back, and made long furrows. (1 Cor. iv. 13. Psal. cxxix. 3.)
The plea of privilege amidst so tumultuous a multitude, might have been in vain, and therefore was for the present prudently waved; but it was justly afterwards urged, and the magistrates challenged for their arbitrary proceedings, before they knew who and what they were, and required to attend upon them in person, to acknowledge and atone for their fault. Here was a true mag-
nanimity, proceeding not from pride but from humanity: Their reputation as ministers of Christ was worthy of a guard, and worthy of some reparation where it had received so notorious an insult. The rashness of the magistrates was also worthy of being rebuked and mortified; which might have proved an occa-
sion of suffering to other innocent persons, had not this instance of it been animadverted upon; yet no revenge was sought, nor were they, as some have been in the like case, laid under a ne-
cessity of buying their peace, to avoid a prosecution which might have ended in their ruin. Paul knew how to join the tender-
ness
ness of the Christian with the dignity of the Roman citizen, and
contended for his own rights no farther than that very conten-
Ver. might be an act of general goodness. Let us go and do like-
38, 39 wise: Let us learn, even from the example of these unjust rulers,
to be willing to hear reason and truth from those who seem most
our inferiors, and openly to retract any ill-concerted steps which
we may have taken; especially, let us be willing to make the best
reparation in our power to the innocent and the deserving, if
through imprudent heat, or weak credulity, we have been engaged
in any degree to injure them.

SECT. XXXIX.

Paul preaches at Thessalonica and Berea, but is soon chased from
both these places by the violence of the unbelieving Jews. Acts
XVII. 1—15.

Acts XVII. 1.

WHEN Paul and Silas had quittd Philippi,
in that honourable manner which was
described in the former section, they went for-
ward in their progress; and taking their journey
westward through Amphipolis and Apollonia,
which were likewise considerable cities of Mac-
donia, the former of them having been once
the capital of the first part of it,) they came to
the celebrated Thessalonica; a city which lay
near the coast of the Ægean sea, where the Ro-
man governor held his residence, and where there
2 was also a synagogue of the Jews. And ac-
cording to Paul's usual custom of applying first
to the Jews, he entered in to their assembly, and
made one among them, and strongly argued and
discoursed to them for three succeeding sabbaths,
from

a For three succeeding sabbaths.] It has been concluded from hence, that Paul
continued but three weeks at Thessalonica; but, as it evidently appears that, while
he was in this city, he not only wrought with his own hands to procure a subsis-
tence, (1 Thess. ii. 9; 2 Thess. iii. 8,) but also received supplies more than once,
from Philippi; (compare Phil. iv. 16.) I think it much more probable, (as Dr.
Benson well argues, Hist. Vol. II. p. 94,
95,) that after the Jews appeared so obsti-
nate in their impiety, as most of them
did, he desisted from disputing or teaching
in their synagogue, after the third sabbath,
and then proceeded for some time among
the Gentiles, before the assault mentioned

ver. 5, which drove him from this city. It appears, that, during his stay here, great
numbers of Gentile Idolaters received the
gospel with remarkable zeal and affection;
(1 Thess. i. 9, 10,) so that a church was
founded in the midst of their persecutions,
which became famous in all Macedonia and
Asia; (ibid. ver. 5—8;) And though the apostle, after having treated
these new converts with extraordinary
tenderness during his abode with them, was
quickly forced to leave them, (chap. ii. 7,
8, 11, & seq.) and they about the same
time lost some Christian brethren by death,
who were dear to them, and might have
been remarkably useful; (chap. iv. 18, &
seq.) yet they continued to behave well

b
The Jews are enraged, and raise a mob against them.

Opening discourse:

3 Opening and alledging, that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead: and that this Jesus whom I preach unto you, is Christ.

4 And some of them believed, and consort ed with Paul and Silas: and of the devout Greeks a great multitude, and of the chief women not a few.

5 But the Jews which believed not, moved with envy, took unto them certain lewd fellows of the baser sort, and gathered a company, and set all the city on an uproar, and assaulted the house of Jason, and sought to

from various passages out of the scriptures, for which they professed so great a regard; Opening [them] with great exactness, and evidently showing them by clear and incontestible arguments, taken from these sacred oracles, that the Messiah ought, according to the whole tenor of the prophecies, to suffer the last extremities from the unbelieving generation among whom he was to appear, and then to rise from the dead, how contrary soever it was to their prejudiced apprehensions: and that this is the true expected Messiah, [even] Jesus of Nazareth, whom, said he, I make it my business to declare unto you, and to all to whom I come.

This was the substance of what he inculcated upon them in repeated discourses, and the success was various; for notwithstanding all the prejudices of the Jews, such was the evidence of what he said, that some of them believed, and adhered to Paul and Silas: and also a considerable number of the devout Greeks, who had either embraced the Jewish religion, or at least worshipped with those that had, and not a few of the principal women of the city.

But, on the other hand, there were many who rejected the gospel, and that, as it afterwards appeared, with great malignity of heart: For after some time, the unbelieving Jews, filled with indignation, and in a wild transport of un gov ernable zeal on the occasion, gathered together some mean and profligate fellows, and making a mob, threw the whole city into a tumult; and assaulting with great violence the house of Jason, where Paul and his companions lodged, they endeavoured

so that Paul received a very comfortable account of them by Timothy; (chap. iii. 6, 7,) and they afterwards advanced in faith, charity, and courage, amidst their growing trials; (2 Thess. i. 3, 4,) though some few behaved irregularly, and got into an idle and negligent way of living, which brings much reproach upon a Christian profession, and therefore required church-discipline. (Ibid. iii. 6—15.) It also appears that, when Paul was with them, he took an opportunity of hinting to them the rise of Antichrist, which, as they a little mistook his meaning, gave occasion to that celebrated prophecy, 2 Thess. ii. 1—12. I conclude, that these hints from the Epistles, to complete and illustrate the short account given in the Acts, will not, here or elsewhere, be disagreeable to

my readers, but that they will rather be pleased to have as complete a view as may be of the Scripture history of the Christian Church in the apostle's time.

b Evidently showing them.] This seems the proper import of the word ἀπειθεῖναί, which signifies laying a thing open before the eyes of the spectators. Groton and Eisner think, the last words of the preceding verse should have begun thus: καὶ οἱ τῶν Ἱεροσολύμων ἀνθρώπων, opening and evincing from the Scriptures, &c.

c Jason.] As Jason seems (by Rom. xvi. 21,) to have been a relation of Paul, it is not improbable, that he was an Hellenistical Jew; but Mr. L'Enfant's argument from his name seems not sufficient to prove him to have been so.

d Another
Jason and others are brought before the magistrates.

endaved to bring them out to the people, with a design to have exposed them to the fury of the mob, whom they had so incensed against them, that they were ready to have torn them to pieces. But not finding them as they expected in the house, they dragged out Jason and some others of the brethren who were with him, to the rulers of the city, crying out with great fury, These turbulent, mischievous men, that have turned the world upside down, and thrown every place through which they have passed into the utmost confusion, are now come hither also, to create the same disturbance among us: And this Jason has privately received and sheltered them under his roof, and so hath made himself responsible for all the mischief they may do here; And it is highly necessary that an immediate stop be put to their proceedings, as all these men are certainly engaged in some design that may be dangerous to the State, and are in effect guilty of high treason against the emperor; for they act directly contrary to the decrees and interest of Caesar, saying, that there is another independent and even superior king [one] Jesus:a whom though he were crucified at Jerusalem several years ago, they foolishly assert to be raised to universal empire, and demand the obedience of all men to him as their supreme Lord.

And as the charge was formed in such a manner, that their neglecting it might render them obnoxious to the Romans, they troubled and alarmed both the multitude and the magistrates of the city when they heard these things; which seemed to contain something of a formidable nature, which they could not fully understand. But they were not willing to proceed to extremities against a neighbour, merely for harbouring persons who, whatever might be alleged against them, were in a manner strangers to him; and therefore, having only taken security of Jason, and the rest of the brethren who were brought before them, to bind them to their good behaviour, and to appear when they were called to bring them out to the people.

6 And when they found them not, they drew Jason, and certain brethren, unto the rulers of the city, crying, These that have turned the world upside down, are come hither also:

7 Whom Jason hath received: and these all do contrary to the decrees of Caesar, saying, That there is another king, one Jesus.

8 And they troubled the people, and the rulers of the city when they heard these things.

9 And when they had taken security of Jason, and of the other, they let them go.

a Another king.] Though the Roman Emperor did not pretend to be the only king or monarch, yet in all the conquered provinces, or dependent states, there could be no king established without his consent; and it is not improbable, that the title of Lord, so frequently and so justly given by Christians to their great Master, might be used as a handle of accusation on such an occasion as this.
10 And the brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night unto Berea: who coming thither, went into the synagogue of the Jews.

11 These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.

12 Therefore many of the Jews, and of the respectable Gentiles, came, and remained for the space of many days.

* Of a nobler and more generous disposition, &c.* There is, as Dr. Whitby has observed, a peculiar spirit and propriety in this expression, as the Jews boasted that they were **μακάριοι καὶ εὐγενεῖς**, free and noble, by virtue of their descent from Abraham and the other patriarchs. These Bereans, imitating the rational faith of their great progenitor, were **εὐγενεῖς**, his more genuine offspring.

[Daily examining the scriptures.] It is very unjust to argue, from the conduct of the apostles with respect to the Jews, and from that of these free and generous inquirers, that Christianity cannot be proved otherwise than from the prophecies of the Old Testament. It might be demonstrated from various topics of external and internal evidence, to those who never heard of any former revelation. Another very important additional argument does indeed arise from the accomplishment of prophecies; and when it has been asserted (as we know it has,) by the authorized teachers of the gospel, not only that Christ is a divine messenger, but also that his appearance was foretold to the Jews, then it is impossible to vindicate Christ’s mission without shewing that it was so. But, in examining the particular texts in question, we are not only to enquire, whether the sense given by the apostles be, in itself considered, most easy and natural, which is generally the case; but (especially on account of the obscurity which must of course attend prophecy) we are to consider whether, the improbability of the sense they give in any particular instance, or in all instances, be sufficient to balance the other proofs they produced of being under a divine guidance, before we can draw any conclusion to the prejudice of their plenary inspiration; so very far should we be from concluding, without such an over-balance, that Christianity is false, which yet has generally been the way of our indolent half-thinkers, and of Mr. Collins in particular, whose reflections on this text gave occasion to this remark.
a correspondence there was between the words of these christian preachers, and those of their own prophets to which they referred, believed the gospel; and also several of the Grecian women of considerable rank, and of the men not a few; so that there was on the whole, a fair prospect of founding a flourishing church in this place.

13 But an unhappy opposition soon arose from the malice of their persecutors; for as some of the Jews of Thessalonica understood that the word of God was preached by Paul at Beraea with such promising success, not content with what they had done to oppose it at home, they came thither also, raising [a storm among] the populace, and r. presenting Paul and his associates as factious and turbulent people, to whom it was dangerous to give any the least shelter or coun-
tenance. And then immediately the brethren, equally solicitous with those of Thessalonica in the like case, as to the danger he might incur in consequence of the growing influence of his unjust accusers, and the peculiar malice which they had against him, sent away Paul, as if he were to go by sea to some of the southern cities of Greece; and they chose to direct him to the road which led to the sea, that if he had not an opportunity of embarking, or did not think proper to do it, his malicious enemies might at least be discouraged from any farther attempt to pursue him; which they might probably have done, if they had known he would have travelled by land. But Silas and Timothy, as their characters were not so public, or their persons so obnoxious, did not go with him from Berea, but continued there a while longer, to settle the new planted church, and to in-
struct them more fully in the doctrine of the gospel.

14 And they that conducted Paul, brought him by land as far as the celebrated city of Athens, that unequalled seat of learning among the Greeks; and having received an order from him to Silas and Timothy, that they should come to him as soon of them believed; also of honourable women which were Greeks, and of men not a few.

15 But when the Jews of Thessalonica had knowledge that the word of God was preached of Paul at Berea, they came thither also, and stirred up the people.

14 And then immediately the brethren sent away Paul, to go as it were to the sea; but Silas and Timo-
theus abode there still.

And they that conducted Paul, brought him into Athens; and receiving a command-
ment unto Silas and Timo-
theus,
Reflections on the opposition made to the apostles.

Soon as might be, to inform him of the state of the new converts he had left behind him at Thessalonica and Berea, they went away; and he continued alone at Athens, with a heart full of solicitude on account of his brethren, and of these infant churches.

IMPROVEMENT.

With how much grace and propriety might the apostle say, Ver. of bonds and imprisonments, in the most grievous circumstances that could attend them, None of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto me, so that I may finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God. (Acts xx. 24.) He gave a remarkable proof of this heroic temper, when having (as he himself expresses it) been shamefuly intreated at Philippi, he was bold in his God to preach the gospel of God at Thessalonica too, though it were with much contention, through the perverse opposition of these unbelieving Jews. (1 Thess. ii. 2.)

He boldly declared to them, and proved it by unanswerable evidence, that the Messiah whom they so eagerly expected, and of whose temporal kingdom they so fondly dreamt, must, in order to establish his claim from the accomplishment of prophecies, suffer, and rise from the dead: And then he shewed, agreeably to those important premises, that Jesus whom he preached to them was that very person; but instead of receiving his testimony with thankfulness, and the word of God with obedience, what iniquity and obstinacy of heart did these Jews shew! Unhappy nation, who as Paul most justly speaks of them, (1 Thess. ii. 15, 16,) having killed the Lord Jesus, and their own prophets, persecuted the apostles also; not pleasing God, and being contrary to all men, forbidding, so far as in them lay, the appointed messengers of this glorious salvation to preach to the Gentiles that they might be saved; thereby alas, filling up the measure of their iniquities, till wrath came upon them to the uttermost, and avenged at once the blood of Christ and that of his ministers, whom they had slaughtered, and those immortal souls whom they had laboured to destroy.

b An ord e to S lax and Timothy that they should come to him, &c.) Perhaps Paul expected some considerable success would attend his labours at Athens, and was therefore desirous to engage the assistance of these pious and excellent persons. Nevertheless God did not see fit to answer these hopes; and though they came to him, as he had ordered, or at least one of them, that is, Timothy, he was quickly obliged to send him away, especially as he was so solicitous about his dear friends at Thessalonica. See 1 Thess. iii. 1, 2.
Their blind and furious zeal for the law, to which, after all, the apostles did a much greater honour than they could possibly do, engaged them to list under their banners the vilest and most infamous of mankind, certain lewd fellows of the baser sort, the pitch, of whose understandings, as well as the turn of their tempers, rendered them the proper tools upon such occasions: And these profigate wretches themselves, the reproach and the plague of mankind, are the persons into whose mouth that senseless cry against the apostles was to be put, that they turned the world upside down. Competent judges indeed of the interests of society, and worthy guardians of its peace!

Such charges, we see, may be brought against the most innocent, the most benevolent, and the most useful of mankind. Thus was Paul accuse by Tertullus, as a pestilent fellow, a mover of sedition throughout the world, and a ringleader of one of the most pernicious sects that ever appeared in it: (Acts xxiv. 5.) Nor did Jesus, our divine Master, escape; but was accused, condemned, and executed, as a traitor to Caesar and to his country. But could these clamorous creatures have thought of proof, where would they have been able to find it? If to testify the truth which God had given them in charge; if to exhort to universal love; if to command men that they should study to be quiet, and do their own business, that if it were possible, as much as lay in them, they should live peaceably with all men, doing good to all as they had opportunity; if to enforce these exhortations by the strongest arguments, the warmest exhortations by the most amiable examples; if thus to teach, and thus to act, were turning the world upside down, the apostles were indeed the subverters of it: But O, who would not pray for the happy time, when the world should be thus subverted!

Let the claims of Jesus to universal monarchy be rightly understood, and Caesar shall find nothing contrary to his just decrees, but every thing subservient to his true interest. The Redeemer's kingdom is not of this world, (John xviii. 36.) nor can the just rights both of princes and subjects be ever so effectually established, as by a submission to him. May the kings of the earth be so wise as to know this, and all under their government so happy as seriously to consider it.

Security was taken of Paul's friends, and it was prudent in the magistrates to carry it no farther. The apostle himself was obliged immediately to quit them, under the shelter of the night, with a heart full of tender solicitude for these new converts; yet he did not reflect upon his journey to Thessalonica with regret, but amidst all the difficulties he met with, was (as he afterwards tells them) incessantly thanking God on their account, because they received the gospel which they heard of him, not as the word of men...
While Paul was at Athens, his spirit was moved;

men, but (as it in truth) the word of God, and became followers of the churches of God elsewhere. (1 Thess. ii. 13, 14.)

Providence brought him in safety and liberty to Berea, and 11, 12 here he met with a more candid reception: The Bereans shewed a true nobleness of spirit, for they received the word with readiness, and searched the scriptures daily, that they might judge for themselves, whether things were there as Paul represented them. While the ministers of Christ are faithful and skilful in the execution of their office, they will not desire that what they say should be received with an implicit subjection; but will be contented, if they should be tried by the standard of scripture. To this touchstone may our doctrines and exhortations be honestly brought and let them always be received or rejected as they are found agreeable or disagreeable to it.

SECT. XL.

Paul continues a while at Athens, and, being deeply affected with the idolatry of that learned city, makes an excellent discourse to them, but with little success. Acts XVII. 16, to the end.

Acts XVII. 16. NOW while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was stirred in him, when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry.

Acts XVII. 16. NOW while Paul was waiting for Silas and Timothy, after the message he had sent them (as was before observed) to come to him at Athens, the notice that he took of their religious state affected him with such concern and indignation, that his spirit within him was strongly moved, and had an unusual kind of edge set upon it, while he beheld the excessive superstition of that famous city, which was esteemed the seat of learning and politeness, and found it in so gross and scandalous a manner enslaved to idolatry. He therefore discoursed publicly upon

\[\text{\textsuperscript{a} His spirit within him was strongly moved.}\]

This, which is here expressed in the original by θυμοῦχος, appears to have been its proper character. Athens was therefore called by Xenophon the altar of Greece; and Xenophon observes, "that it had twice as many sacred festivals as any other city." (Xen. de Rep. Athen. p. 700.) The grave Pausanias tells us, "It had more images, than all the rest of Greece:" (Attic. cap. 17, 24;) and one of the satirists mockingly says, "It was easier to find a god than a man there." Petron. Satyric. cap. 17.) Dr. Hammond has a fine note to illustrate this. See also Mr. Biscoe.

\[\text{\textsuperscript{b} He beheld the city enslaved to idolatry.}\]
To find the whole city ensnared to idolatry.

Section XII.

Acts XVII.17.

upon the great principles of natural and revealed religion in the synagogue, addressing himself to the Jews, and to other pious persons [that worshipped with them] on their sabbath days; and took all opportunities of speaking about matters of religion every day, in the great forum or market-place, to those Athenians whom he met with in the public edifices which were erected there.

But some of the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers opposed themselves to him; the formar of which entirely denied a divine Providence, and held

But some of the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers opposed themselves to him: the former of which entirely denied a divine Providence, and held

Rice in Boyle’s Loci, chap. viii. § 11, p. 317, 321; and The Knowledge of divine things from Revel. p. 228, 229. The author last mentioned tells us, (I wish I could find on what particular authorities,) that a fool had been capitally condemned there for killing one of Asclepius’s sparrows, and that a little child, accidentally taking up a piece of gold that fell from Diana’s crown was put to death for sacrilege. (Ibid. p. 240.) The prevalence of such a variety of senseless superstitions in this most learned and polite city, which all its neighbours beheld with so much veneration, gives us a most lively and affecting idea of the need we have, in the most improved state of human reason, of being taught by a divine revelation. May the admirers of the Grecian wisdom seriously consider it, and they will find almost every one of their classics an advocate for the gospel!

The Jews and pious persons that worshipped with them. It appears plainly from this text, and perhaps also from ver. 4, I think beyond any other, that the character of each sect is at least sometimes given by Luke to persons who used to worship the true God, and yet were not circumcised, which if they had been, I think they would not have been distinguished from Jews. But that the title was appropriated to such, and especially that such could properly be called proselytes of the gate, in the technical sense in which Maimonides, and almost all our modern writers from him explain the word, will by no means follow.

Some of the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers. The Epicurean notions came so near to those of our own world, that it may seem less needful to explain them any farther than is done in the paraphrase: and as those for the former sect, have often been known by various pronouns, or for their prejudices against the philosophy of the Pagans, and of this sect in particular, have represented their doctrines in a very different light; and indeed the notorious inconsistency between some of their own writers, and some of the ancients in their account of them, has greatly perplexed the matter. But I think Dr. Benson has expressed himself, on the whole, in a very impartial and judicious, as well as comprehensive manner, (Hist. Vol. II. p. 160,) when he tells us, “They held, that matter was eternal, God corporal,” that is, a fiery substance, “and that either God was the soul of the world, or the world itself a God. They” generally “looked upon all things as subject to an irresistible fate,” though some of them at least seem to me to have exempted the human will from it; “that virtue was its own sufficient reward, and vice its own sufficient punishment. And they fluctuated exceedingly, as to their belief of future rewards and punishments, though they had some expectations of a future state of existence, as well as of the conflagration and renunciation of the world;” with relation to which, several of them seem to have expected a continual revolution of exactly similar events at equal distant periods of time. The attentive reader will easily see, how opposite the genius of each of these sects was to the pure and humble spirit of Christianity, and how happily the apostle levels his incomparable discourse at some of the most distinguishing and important errors of each, while, without expressly attacking either, he seems only intent of giving a plain summary of his own religious principles, in which he appears a most charming model of the true way of teaching and reformating mankind. (See Dr. Bentley at Boyle’s Lecture, Sermon II. at the beginning.) For a larger account of the Epicureans and Stoics, see Le Clerc’s Eccles. Hist. Croz. § ii. cap. 4. 5; Budens in his excellent Hist. of Phil. cap. iv. § 43, 50, & ibid. § 56—49; and above all for the latter, Lips. Manuscript. ad Phil. Stoicam, praefatio, lib. i. cap. 14, 15.
The Epicureans and Stoics oppose Paul in his preaching.

reans, and of the Sto-ics, encountered him; and some said, What will this babbler say? other some, He seems-eth to be a setter forth of strange gods: because he preached unto them Jesus, and the resurrection.

19 And they took him, and brought him unto Areopagus, saying,

19 And as the crowd increased to a greater number than could conveniently hear him in the place where they were, they took him, and conducted [him] to that celebrated hill near the citadel, which was called the Areopagus, being

e Retailers of scraps.] This was the best phrase I could think of, to express the original κραπατσιάν, which signifies "a contemptible creature, that picks up scattered seeds in the market, or elsewhere;" and therefore Mr. Fleming (Christol. Vol. II. p. 428,) would render it grain-gatherer, or less literally, holder-forth. To have rendered it this mountebank, as the translation of 1727 does, seemed both ludicrous and inaccurate. The original admirably expresses the contempt they had of an unknown foreigner, that pretended to teach all the several professors of their learned and illustrious body of philosophers.-Witsius (Meletem, p. 81–83,) has taken great pains to shew by many authorities, that it comprehends the three ideas of meanness, servility, and impudence, as if it had been said, This contemptible, prating, sacrilegious creature; but, as this seems to strain the matter to an extreme, I chose the least magnificent sense, especially as that was pelting enough, and gives one but an ill idea of their sense and politeness.

f Jesus, and the resurrection.] It seems with great reason that Dr. Hammond follows Chrysostom's interpretation, which is that given in the parable. Stupid as the mistake seems, it is the less to be wondered at, since Resurrection might as well be counted a deity, as Shame, Faming, and Desire, among the Athenians, Pausan. Attic. cap. 17., or as the Fever, and some things too scandalous here to name, were among the Romans, as Dr. Hammond, Mr. Reeves, (Apol. Vol. II. p. 53,) and many others have long since remarked. Raphe- lius's attempt to overthrow this interpretation, by proving that ἀκούσας signifies the person of a daemon, and also any property or work belonging to him, (Annot. ex Xen. p. 167–175,) is quite unsuccessful; for none of his authorities prove, it expresses both in the same place.

f They took him, and conducted him to the Areopagus.] For an account of this celebrated place, and the court of judges which sat there, to try all the most important causes civil or criminal, see Archbishop Potter's Greek Antiq. Book I. chap. 19, and, for the etymology, Dr. Hammond and Le Clerc's Supplement. As the cognizance of religious causes also lay in these judges, Ecza, Dr. Hammond, and some other critics have thought, that Paul was brought to a formal trial before them; but it evidently appears to be a mistake, not only from
They take him to the Areopagus, to hear what he taught.

sect. xi.

Acts XVII. 19.

A part of their city dedicated to Mars the God of battle, whom they called Areios, and the seat of that illustrious senate who had the name of Areopagites, from their assembling there. And when he was come thither they applied to him, saying, May we be allowed to know more fully and particularly what this new doctrine is which is spoken by thee? For thou bringest some strange things to our ears, exceedingly different from what we have ever received from any of those many professors of various learning which this celebrated city has produced: We would therefore willingly know, what these things mean; and choose to hear them from thine own mouth, rather than by the uncertain report of others, who may not perhaps clearly understand what thou intendest, or accurately relate what thou hast said.

Now this was entirely agreeable to the genius of the place: for all the Athenians, and the numerous strangers that sojourn among them, delight to spend their leisure time, of which many of them have a great deal, in nothing else but telling or hearing somewhat new, which may amuse that speculative and curious temper they are exceeding prone to indulge.

Paul therefore standing up in the middle of the Areopagus, where he might be most conveniently heard by a large number of people, addressed himself to them in a very suitable discourse, and said, Ye men of Athens, it seems as if I might address you with the greater prospect of success on the occasion which now calls me to speak among you, as I perceive you are exceedingly addicted to the worship of invisible powers. For as

the title by which Paul addresses them in his discourse, (from which Limborch argues,) but from the whole tenor of the story and particularly as the persons who brought him hither are represented, not as accusing him of any thing obnoxious, but only as desiring to be informed, what that strange thing, his new doctrine was.

The strangers that sojourn among them, delight to spend their leisure time (newerq) in —somewhat new.] It is well known that the young nobility and gentry of Italy, and most of the neighbouring countries, generally studied some time at Athens, where there were the most celebrated professors in all the liberal arts and sciences. Several of the critics have shewn, how remarkable the Athenians were for their love of novelty, and none, that I recollect, better than Raphaelius, Annot. ex. Xen. p. 172, 173.

1 Exceedingly addicted to the worship of invisible powers.] This English phrase, which is very agreeable to the etymology of διακαινωμεθαι, has, what I think a version of Scripture should always if possible have, the ambiguity of the original, which Dr. Hammond, and especially Revius on Vulg., prove to be capable of a good as well as a bad sense; (compare Acts xxv. 19;) whereas neither superstitions nor religions have that ambiguity.—Dr. Lardner, Credib. Book I. chap. 8, § 7, Vol. I. p. 427.—430, (as Mr. Fleming also had done, Christology, Vol. II. p. 431,) has well observed.

20 For thou bringest certain strange things to our ears: we would know therefore what these things mean.

21 (For all the Athenians, and strangers which were there, spent their time in nothing else, but either to tell or to hear some new thing)

22 Then Paul stood in the midst of Mars' hill, and said, Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious.
Paul preaches in the Areopagus at Athens.

23 For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you.

as I passed along the streets of this elegant and magnificent city, and beheld the objects and instruments of your worship, I found an altar on which there was this remarkable inscription, "To the unknown God!", so desirous do you seem to be, that no deity, whether known or unknown, may be passed by without some regard: Now I should think myself inexpressibly happy, if on this incident I might graft those instructions which might bring you to the true knowledge of religion, and determine the devotions you seem so ready to pay to him who is the only worthy object of them: Him therefore whom in this instance ye worship, without particularly

observed, that giving the worst signification of which it is capable does not well suit the decorum, which so well-bred a man as Paul was, would no doubt maintain before this polite assembly; whereas, on our interpretation, it opens his discourse, not only in an offensive, but in a very obliging manner, which I have endeavoured farther to express in the paraphrase. This accurate critic shows, that strangers at Athens used to begin their public discourses with some compliment to the place and its inhabitants. The medium Paul chooses cannot be sufficiently admired.

1 The objects and instruments of your worship.] This is the proper signification of ὑπὲρτος, which has no English word exactly corresponding to it. Compare 2 Thess. ii. 4

1 In the unknown God.] The express testimony of Lucian (Philolop. ad fin.) sufficiently proves, that there was such an inscription at Athens, and shows, how unnecessary, as well as unwarrantable, it was in Jason to suppose, that the apostle, to serve his own purpose, gives this turn to an inscription, which bore on its front a plurality of deities. Whence this important phenomenon arose, or to what it particularly referred, it is more difficult to say. Wisius, (Metl. p. 83.) with Heinæus, (in loc.) understands it of Jehovah, whose name being not pronounced by the Jews themselves, might give occasion to this appellation; and to this sense Mr. Bacon inclines, Boyle's Lect. chap viii. § 92, p. 329-325. Dr. Welwood (Pref. to the Banquet of Xenophon, p. 15, 19.) supposes, that Socrates reared this altar, to express his devotion to the one living and true God, of whom the Athenians had no notion, and whose incomprehensible being he insinuated, by this inscription, to be far beyond the reach of their understanding or his own; and in this I should joyfully acquiesce, could I find one ancient testimony in confirmation of the fact. As it is, to omit other conjectures, I must give the preference to that, which Beza and Dr. Hammond have mentioned, and which Mr. Hallet (Disc. on Scrip. Vol. i. p. 367, 308.) has laboured at large to confirm and illustrate, though I think none of these learned writers has set it in its most natural and advantageous light. Diogenes Laertius, in his Life of Epimenides, (see lib. i. p. 29, C. with the Notes of J. Casaubon and Menagius,) assures us, that in the time of that philosopher, [about 600 years before Christ] there was a terrible pestilence at Athens, in order to avert which, when none of the deities to whom they sacrificed appeared able or willing to help them, Epimenides advised them to bring some sheep to the Areopagus, and, letting them loose from thence, to follow them till they lay down, and then to sacrifice them (as I suppose the words τον προσεχεις one signifies) to the God near whose temple or altar they then were. Now it seems probable, that Athens not being then so full of these monuments of superstition as afterwards, these sheep lay down in places where none of them were near, and so occasioned the rearing what the historian calls anonymous altars, or altars each of which had the inscription ἀνώνυμος θεός, to the unknown God, meaning thereby the Deity who had sent the plague, whoever he were; one of which altars, at least, however it might have been repaired, remained till Paul's time, and long after. Now, as the God, whom Paul preached, as Lord of all, was indeed the Deity who sent and removed this pestilence, the apostle might with great propriety tell the Athenians, he declared to them him, whom without knowing him they worshipped, as I think the concluding words of the 23d verse may most decently be rendered. m Neither
The God whom he preached was the former of all things:

particularly knowing him, do I now publicly declare unto you. This is the deity that I am come to preach among you, even the one glorious and eternal God, who made the world and all things that are therein; and it is evident, that such must be the excellency of his nature, that being the supreme and uncontrollable Lord of all the dominions of heaven and earth, he dwelleth not in temples made with hands:

Neither is he served by human hands lifted up in prayer, or stretched out with the most costly offerings, as if he stood in need of any thing which we can give, or which we can do: For he himself is indeed the great universal benefactor, from whom all our enjoyments and all our powers of action are derived; as he is continually giving to all the human race, life and breath, and all things, which they can neither consecrate to him, or possess themselves.

And he hath made of one blood, and caused to descend from one original pair, the immediate work of his own almighty power and goodness, the whole nation and species of men, now by his providential care so propagated, as to inhabit and cover all the face of the earth, having marked out in his eternal and unerring counsel, the times fore-allotted [to each] in their respective order, and appointed the several boundaries of their different habitations: All things in the disposition of his Providence centering in this one advantage of such an ambiguity of expression. If it be objected, (as I know it has been,) that no principle of reason could prove, that all mankind were descended from one original pair, I answer, That it was not necessary for the apostle separately to prove every article of his doctrine, of which he here gives a summary account. Had they heard him out, he would no doubt have given them proper evidence, that he had a commission from God to teach it, and that therefore it was to be received on the authority of the revealer.

The times fore-allotted to each in their respective order.] The expression σημείον τοῦ θεοῦ signifies the wisdom, as well as reality, of this divine disposition of events, as fixed by God in his eternal counsels under the conduct of his Providence, which therefore I have endeavoured to express in the paraphrase. (Compare note on chap. xiii. 48. p. 107.) This evidently struck at the root of the whole Epicurean system.
In whom we all exist, and whose offspring we are.

1 For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring.

28 Forasmuch then, as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device.

30 And the times of this ignorance God winked.

v In him we live, and (xwmi|sa) are moved, and do exist.] No words can better express that continual and necessary dependence of all derived beings, in their existence, and all their operations, on their first and ultimate cause, which the truest philosophy, as well as theology, teaches. The thought, in words just like these, is found in an old Greek poet; but Paul does not mention it as a quotation, so that I rather think with Le Clerc, that the poet borrowed it from hence, though to be sure, many of the ancients had before expressed themselves much to the same purpose. See Guthrie ad Antonin. lib. iv. § 23, & lib. v. § 27.

v For we his offspring are.] These words, To γένεσθαι καὶ γενέσθαι τε καὶ εὐγένεσθαι (which I chose to put into a poetical order in the version, as best imitating the original), are well known to be found in Aratus, a poet of Cilicia, Paul's own country, who lived almost 300 years before this time,—I wonder so few writers should have added, that they are, with the alteration of one letter only, to be found in the Hymn of Cleanthes to Jupiter, of the Supreme God, which I willingly mention, as beyond comparison the purest and finest piece of natural religion, of its length, which I know in the whole world of Pagan antiquity; and which, so far as I can recollect, contains nothing unworthy of a Christian, or, as I had almost said, of an inspired pen. It is to be found in Hen. Steph. Poet. Philos. p. 49, & seq. and with Dupont’s Latin Translation in Cutler’s Intellect. System, Book 1. chap. 4, p. 432, 433; and I am sorry I know not where to refer my reader to a good English version of it. The apostle might perhaps refer to Cleanthes, as well as to his countryman Aratus, when he introduces this quotation, as what some of their own poets had said.

God
He calls them to repent, in view of a judgment to come.

Sect. xi. to govern yourselves by more rational and 
exalted views of religion; for though God, as it 
were overlooked the time of this ignorance, and 
did not bear any general testimony against these 
corruptions in worship, nor severely punish the 
nations who fell into them, so long as they 
maintained any thing of natural virtue, humanity and probity; he now interposes in a public 
and solemn manner, and expressly charges all men, to whom the sound of the gospel comes, 
every where to repent and return to his worship 
and obedience, as they regard their eternal hap-
piness and salvation. And this he requires 
with a merciful kind of severity and importu-
nity, as what must immediately be done, because 
he hath appointed a great and awful day, in which 
he will judge the whole world in righteousness, 
and pass a final sentence of happiness or misery 
on each, according to his true character and behaviour; which he will do by that illustrious Man, whom he hath by miraculous interpositions 
marked out as ordained for that important pur-
pose, of which he hath given sufficient assurance 
to all men, by raising him from the dead, accord-
ing to his known and public prediction, where-
by he has demonstrated how able he is to raise 
others.

And when they heard him making mention, 
though but incidentally, of the resurrection of the 
dead, some rudely mocked, and without staying 
to hear the evidence, made a jest of it as a des-
picable and incredible tale, not worthy to be any 
longer heard: And others, whose curiosity was 
satisfied in hearing in a few words his scheme 
and

* God as it were overlooked the times of 
this ignorance.] This usage expresses, 
which Mr. Howe paraphrases, "The 
beams of his eye did in a manner shoot 
over them;" (Howe's Works, Vol. II. p. 
283) that is, He did not appear to take no-
tice of them by sending express messages 
to them as he did to the Jews, and now 
also to the Gentiles, as it follows, charging 
all men every where to repent.—The re-
ader will easily perceive, there is a dignity 
in this latter expression, becoming one 
who was conscious to himself that he was 
indeed an ambassador from the king of heav-
en, who could (to allude to that remark-
able story, Liv. lib. xlv. cap. 12.) draw a 
circle about the greatest monarch, and de-
mand a decisive manner before he stirred 
out of it. This universal demand of repen-
tence declared, in the strongest terms, 
universal guilt, and admirably confronted 
the pride of the haughtiest Stoic of them 
all; and at the same time, bore down all the 
idle plea of falsity; for who could re-
peat of doing what he apprehended he 
could not but have done?

* Without staying to hear the evidence.] We are by no means to imagine, this was 
all the apostle intended to have said; but 
the insinuation of some of these philosophers, 
and the prudency of others of them, cut 
him short; and so they went down to 
righteous condensation, under the guilt of 
having rejected a gospel, the proof of which 
they might have learnt in one single day, 
but would not give themselves the trouble 
of examining; and this is the condemn-
ation among us.

Dionysius
and design, would not allow themselves to attend to his proofs of so extraordinary an assertion; but coldly said, It is enough for the present, we will hear thee again upon this subject, when a more convenient opportunity offers.

And thus Paul, finding so little disposition in this learned auditory to receive the truth, or so much as to hearken to the evidence of it, went out of the midst of them, and left by far the greater part of the assembly, (notwithstanding all the conceit they had of their own learning, knowledge, and wisdom) in that deplorable state of ignorance, folly, and superstition, in which he found them.

Nevertheless, though what he said was so generally slighted, some men adhered to him, and inquired farther into the evidence of that extraordinary doctrine which he taught concerning Jesus and his resurrection; the consequence of which was, that they believed the gospel, and made a public and courageous profession of it: Among whom was the celebrated Dionysius the Areopagite, a magistrate of great honour and dignity among them, and a woman of considerable rank and character in the city, whose name was Damaris; and there were also some others with them, whom we shall not particularly mention.

**IMPROVEMENT.**

*Adored* be the depths of divine counsel and grace, that when Ver. in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased 32 God, by what they impiously derided as the foolishness of preaching 16 to save them that believe. (1 Cor. i. 21.) Whose spirit is not stirred in some measure, to behold the learned and polite city of Athens, not only abandoned to trifling speculations, but enslaved to idolatry and superstition? And, on the other hand, who can be so insensible of all the charms of reason and true eloquence, as not to be delighted with those prudent and generous attempts which Paul made to recover them from it? When derided and affronted as a vain babbler, as a retailer of scraps, by those who 18 indeed

1 Dionysius the Areopagite, &c.] The members of this court, of which Dionysius was one, are well known to have been persons of great dignity, chosen from among the best families and characters in Athens, so that the title grew into a proverb of honour and integrity. See Cic. ad Attic. lib. i. Epist. 14. Aud. Gall. Noct. Att. lib. xii. cap. 7; Wits. Meletem, p. 86—88. and Mr. Bisce of Boyle's Lect. chap. viii. § 12, p. 325, 326.
Reflections on Paul's preaching at Athens.

indeed shewed themselves to deserve that infamous name, judging a matter before they heard it, and so convicting themselves of shame and folly, (Prov. xviii. 13.) he in the meekness of wisdom, addresses himself to them with that soft tongue which breaketh the bones. (Prov. xxv. 15.) His doctrine droppeth as the rain, and his speech distilled as the dew: (Deut. xxxii. 2.) Pity it was that it produced no more valuable fruits, but rather was abused by some that heard it, to nourish those poisonous weeds which were, alas, the native growth of this luxuriant soil.

We see, that while Paul passed through the streets of Athens, his mind was filled with such pious and benevolent affections as became the mind of a christian and an apostle; and beholding this inscription to the unknown God, he applies himself immediately to declare him to them. Adored be the divine goodness, that we are from our infancy happy in the use of such divine instructions as he gave the Athenians and others; and that though we worship a God whose infinite perfections can never be traced out, he is not entirely an unknown deity to us! May he be known, adored, and obeyed, wide as the works of his hands extend! Even he, the supreme Lord of all who made heaven and earth, and all that is in them; in consequence of which he is infinitely superior to all our most exalted services, as well as beyond any of those representations of him which the ignorance and folly of men have invented in gold, silver, and stone. His power created all, and by his goodness all are supported. Let us consider ourselves as his off-

26, 27 spring, honouring and loving him as the great Father of our spirits; and since we have so necessary and uninterrupted a depen-
dance upon him, since in him we live, and move, and exist continually, let all the affections of our hearts, and all the actions of our lives, be consecrated to his service: And this so much the rather, as it evidently appears, by the revelation of his gospel, that he does not overlook us, but in the most solemn manner calls upon us, and upon all men every where to repent, and to return to him; setting before us in so clear a view the awful solemnity of that appointed day, in which he will judge the whole world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained to this glorious purpose, even by Jesus, to whom, as the Son of man, all judgment is wisely and righteously committed. The Lord grant that we may all find mercy of the Lord in that day! (2 Tim. 1. 18.)

In the mean time, may the declaration of it bring multitudes to repentance and faith; and especially may it work thus on those who, like Dionysius and Damaris, are distinguished by their rank and circumstances in life, that their usefulness in the world may be as extensive as their influence, and their names precious in the church among those that are yet unborn.
Paul goeth to Corinth, where he finds Aquila and Priscilla. 173

SECT. XLI.

Paul settles for a year and a half at Corinth with Aquila and Priscilla, is encouraged by a vision of Christ there, and rescued by Gallio from the rage of the Jews. Acts XVIII. 1.—17.

Acts XVIII. 1. After these things, Paul departed from Athens, and came to Corinth;

2 And found a certain Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus, lately come from Italy, with his wife Priscilla, (because that Claudius had commanded all Jews to depart from Rome,) and came unto them.

3 And because he was of the same craft, he abode with them, and

* Corinth, &c.] Antiquity abounds with passages relating to this city, which before it was destroyed by Mammaius, was looked upon by the Romans as a rival almost as dangerous as Carthage; and having been restored by Julius Caesar, with its almost unparalleled advantages of situation, was grown very considerable. The reader may see some entertaining remarks concerning it in Wilkins Meletem, p. 90.

b Claudius had commanded all the Jews to depart from Rome.] Though Josephus be silent as to this edict, probably as he thought it more prudent to omit the mention of it in a history, in which it is plain he studies to recommend himself and his people to the Romans, yet it is well known, that the fact is expressly mentioned by Suetonius, (Claud. cap. 23,) and that Dio (lib. ix. p. 669. A.) has something to the same purpose; for prohibiting their religious assemblies was in fact banishing them, as Mr. Fleming observes, Christol. Vol. 11. p. 27.—I pretend not certainly to determine, whether that Claudius, whom Suetonius mentions as the occasion of those tumults among the Jews, for which they were expelled from Rome, were, as Abp. Usher, (Annal. p. 269.) and Vandale de Orzo, p. 601.) suppose, a solicitous Jew, or whether, as it is generally thought, the name be a corruption of Christus: (See Tertul. Apol. cap. 3. and Lactant. lib. iv. cap. 7.) Yet I think the latter much more probable, and that the spread of Christianity, which was looked upon as a sect of Jews, and which we know prevailed at Rome about this time, gave that jealous and wretched emperor an unnecessary alarm, the occasion of which Suetonius, not thoroughly understanding it, has misrepresented. And if this were the case, it might be, as Dr. Lardner well observes, (Cred. 5. Book I. chap. 11. § 3. Vol. 1. p. 555.) an additional reason why Josephus, who is always cautious on this head, has passed it over without notice.

c Of the same trade.] It has with great propriety been observed and shown by many learned men here, that it was a point of conscience with the Jews to teach their children some trade, even though they bred them up to the liberal sciences. Hence one of their rabbies is named the shoemaker, and another the baker, &c. (See Deutius and Glicitus in loc. Hist. Meletem, p. 11. 12. and Mr. Biscoe at Boyle's Lect. chap. vii. § 3. p. 272—274.) And it is a custom still prevailing among the Easterns.
Paul lodges at their house, and works as a tent-maker.

them there, and wrought [at it] for his subsistence: (Compare 1 Cor. iv. 22. and 2 Thess. iii. 8.) For they were tent-makers by trade, whose business it was to make tents or pavilions of linen or skins, which were much used, not only by soldiers and travellers, but by others in those hot countries; and Paul (as we have said) had been instructed in that art, as it was usual for those of the Jews who had the most learned education, to be brought up to some mechanical employment for the amusement of their leisure hours, and for their maintenance in life, if any unforeseen revolution should strip them of every thing else which they had to depend upon.

But while he took up his abode here, he disputed in the synagogue every sabbath-day, and earnestly persuaded both the Jews and the Greeks to embrace Christianity, as a religion founded in reason and truth, and the great source and security of happiness both in time and eternity; And he had some success, particularly with regard to the families of Stephanas and Epenetus, who were some of the first converts to Christianity here. (Compare 1 Cor. xvi 15. Rom. xvi. 5. and 1 Cor. i. 14, 16.)

And as soon as Silas and Timothy, whom he had expected at Athens, came from Macedonia to

ers. I think Sir Paul Ricaut somewhere observes, that the Grand Seignior, to whom he was ambassador, was taught to make wooden spoons. And this is intended, not only for an amusement, but to remind youth of the highest rank, how possible it is that they may fall into circumstances, in which it may be necessary for them to support life by such labours as these, which, to be sure, are vastly preferable to begging. It is therefore very ungenerous in Orobio to mention this, as any reproach to Paul, or as bringing his character into the least degree of suspicion. —Paul might have peculiar reasons for this at Corinth, not only as being a stranger, and with some prejudices lying against him as a teacher of a new religion, but perhaps also, as Mr. Cradock observes, (Apost. Hist. p. 111, 112,) from some prophetic intimation of that false apostles, who should arise there, and make a great merit of preaching gratis, while at the same time he dominated over them in a most inconsistent as well as unchristian manner. (See 2 Cor. xi. 7—20.) Whether Paul, and these his companions, made common tents, or wove tapestry hangings, is a question of no importance, though I think the former probable, as the latter would require a more exact skill, than a person so generally employed in far different work would be like to acquire.

4 And he reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath, and persuaded the Jews, and the Greeks.

5 And when Silas and Timothy were come to
to him at Corinth, Paul, farther animated by the presence of his brethren, and the accounts they brought him of the happy consequences of his labours at Thessalonica and elsewhere, was borne away by an unusual impulse in [his] spirit, and zealously persisting in his work, openly testified to the Jews, and by the strongest arguments endeavoured to convince them that Jesus was undoubtedly the true Messiah, whom they pretended impatiently to expect. But when instead of receiving a testimony so warmly urged, and supported with the most demonstrative proofs, they obstinately and perversely set themselves in opposition to the doctrine he taught, and even blasphemed that glorious name on which he was pressing them to fix their dependance; he shook his garment, to signify, that from that time he was determined he would have no more to do with them, or any thing belonging to them; and also to intimate, that God would soon shake them off, as unworthy to be numbered among his people; and upon this he solemnly said to them, Let the guilt of your blood be upon your own head, and there let it rest: I am pure from it, and declare unto you, that by this wilful impenitence and unbelief you are your own murthers. (Compare Ezek. xxxiii. 2—9.) And as God and man can witness that I have done all in my power to prevent so sad an event, I now desist from any farther attempts of this kind; and from henceforth, while I continue in this city, I will go and preach to the Gentiles, who will readily receive that gospel which you so ungratefully reject.

And

6 And when they opposed themselves, and blasphemed, he shook his raiment, and said unto them, Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean: from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles.

As soon as Silas and Timothy come from Macedonia.] Silas and Timothy had been left at Berea, when Paul came from thence, and had directions sent them, as soon as he arrived at Athens, quickly to follow him; (chap. xvii. 14, 15.) which Timothy accordingly did, and was sent back again by Paul to Thessalonica to confirm the faith of his dear converts there of whom he had brought so good an account; (1 Thess. iii. 2, 5, 6.) and it seems to have been from this journey that Timothy now returned with Silas, having probably joined him before he left Macedonia.——This account of the matter seems more probable, than that of Mr. Crudock and some others, who suppose that both Silas and Timothy came from Berea to Paul at Athens, and that, after Timothy had been sent to Thessalonica, and brought the good tidings referred to, both he and Silas were sent from Athens to Macedonia, and were appointed to meet Paul at Corinth, which seems multiplying journeys without proof or necessity.

Was borne away by an unusual impulse in [his] spirit.] Hensius and some others think that the phrase εκκενθησαν τιναμας means he was borne away by an extraordinary impulse of the Spirit of God, the agency of which in this matter, I readily acknowledge, but apprehend the phrase here used rather refers to the effect that agency produced. Compare ver. 25. chap. xix. 21. Rom. xii. 11. for the expression, and for the effect, Jer. xx. 8, 9. Amos ii. 3.
The Jews rejecting Paul, he turns to the Gentiles.

And going out from thence, he went into the house of one whose name was called Justus; who was a worshipper of the true God, though not a complete Jew by profession, and whose house was adjoining to the synagogue; and there he taught.

But though he did not succeed to his wish in what he delivered to the Jews, yet his labours among them were not entirely ineffectual; and it was particularly remarkable, that Crispus the ruler of the synagogue believed in the Lord with all his house: (Compare 1 Cor. i. 14.) And many also of the Corinthians, hearing not only the report of his conversion, but the discourses of the apostle, found the conviction which it produced so powerful, that they believed; and in token of their full resolution to adhere to the gospel, whatever extremities might arise, were baptized, and thereby entered into the Christian church, and settled in it.

At this time Paul, conscious of many imperfections attending his person and address, was discouraged in a view of the learning, politeness, and grandeur, of many Gentile inhabitants of the city to whom he was to speak, so that he was, as he himself expresses it, "among them in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling; (1 Cor. ii. 3;)" and these alarms were much increased by the violent assaults which had lately been made upon him in other places through which he had passed, and the contempt with which he had generally been treated. But the Lord Jesus Christ interposed in a very gracious manner, and said to Paul by a vision in the night, Fear not to go on with thy work even here, but speak my gospel boldly and courageously, and do not keep silence under any present discouragement, or future apprehension: For I myself, by my powerful and gracious presence am continually with thee, and will engage for it, that no man shall fall upon thee to injure thee here; for I have much people in

7 And he departed thence, and entered into a certain man's house, named Justus, one that worshipped God, whose house joined hard to the synagogue.

8 And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord, with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing, believed, and were baptized.

9 Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision, Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace;

10 For I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city.

\[\text{Into the house of one called Justus}^2\]

It has been supposed, that Paul was denied the use and liberty of the synagogue by Sosthenes, who, when Crispus was expelled, was made governor of it. (Fleming's Christology, Vol. II. p. 28.) But Paul himself so solemnly broke off all farther treaty with the Jews in a public way, that we need seek no other reason for his choosing some other place for discoursing to the people, who might desire his instructions. Accordingly he taught here; but I see no proof at all of his quitting his lodgings with Aquila, and therefore no need of inquiring (as some have done,) what was his reason for doing it.
in this city and am determined by my grace to make thy ministry successful among many, by whom thou art ready to apprehend it will be despised.

And encouraged by this assurance in the side-lits and security of which he firmly confided, Paul did, as it were, pitch his tent at Corinth, and sat down [there] for a year and six months; teaching the word of God among them with all freedom, though with deep humility, and maintaining himself by the work of his own hands.

And by the divine blessing on his diligent and pious labours, which he so generously gave them, a most flourishing church was planted at Corinth, "the members of which were filled with all knowledge and utterance, and came behind in no spiritual gifts, for the variety of which they were signally remarkable. (Compare 1 Cor. i. 5, 7.) But so glorious a progress of the gospel here could not fail of exciting the opposition of its enemies; and accordingly, when Gallio was proconsul of Achaia, during the residence that he made at Corinth, the Jews, being now resolved to bear no longer, made an assault upon Paul with one consent, and brought him before the tribunal of that magistrate, Saying in the most clamorous and furious manner,

This is a much people in this city. I cannot think with Linboch and Dr. Benson, (Hist. Vol. II. p. 210.) that virtuous and well disposed Heathens, as such, are here called the people of Christ, or have the character elsewhere of his sheep, (John x. 16, 26.) but rather, that the expression takes in all who should, according to the gracious purposes of Christ, be converted to Christianity, whatever their tempers then were, even not excepting those very vicious ill-disposed, corrupt persons, whose character in their unregenerate state is described in such strong terms, 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10, 11, where the apostle speaks of what they were, before they were converted.

1 Sat-down there a year and six months. During this time he wrote his First Epistle to the Thessalonians, (1 Thess. i. 1—6, compared with Acts xviii. 5.) which seems to have been the earliest of those which occur in the New Testament, and quickly after it, his Second.—Lord Barrington also thinks, that from hence he wrote his Epistle to the Galatians, which seems probable, as he refers there to his having been but lately among them, (Gal. i. 6; iii. 1, 2; iv. 15;) and yet hints nothing of his having been there more than once; so that it seems to refer to the journey mentioned, Acts xvi. 6. (Miscell. Sacr. Abstract, p. 51,) and to have been before that mentioned in the 20th verse of this chapter.

*When Gallio was proconsul of Achaia.* See note i. on chap. xiii. 8, p. 91.—Dr. Lardner justly observes, (Credib. Book I. chap. i. § 12, Vol. i. p. 53—55,) that this is also another instance of the exact propriety, with which St. Luke expresses himself; for though the province of Achaia, which comprehended all the rest of Greece, had a more various fortune than that of Cyprus, and frequently changed its form of government, yet A D. 44, (which is generally supposed to have been about eight years before this event,) it was restored to the senate, and so became proconsular.—It is generally thought this Gallio was elder brother to the famous L. Annius Seneca, the moral philosopher, who was preceptor to Nero, of which, as Mr. Bisce shows, there is great probability; Boyle's Lect. chap. iii. § 9, p. 57, 58.
This turbulent fellow is the author of unsufferable mischiefs here, and all over the country, for he persuades men to worship God in a manner directly contrary to that which the law requires and appoints; and so would introduce corruptions in religion, and to the utmost of his power would endeavour to subvert it.

14 And when Paul would have opened his mouth, and was about to have spoken in his own defence, Gallio would not give him the trouble of making an apology for what he did not look upon to come within his cognizance; but prevented him, and said to the Jews, If it were an act of injustice, or any mischievous licentiousness, O ye Jews, with which you charged the person you have now brought before me, it were but reasonable as it is my office to guard the public peace, not only that I should bear with you in this prosecution, though managed indeed with some excess of eagerness, but also that on proper proof I should exert the power with which I am invested, to punish the offender in proportion to his crime. But if it be a question concerning the propriety of words and names, as whether the person whom he so highly exalts should be called your Messiah or not, and whether God is to be worshipped in the way required by the law, which is received among you as divine; or what regard is due to any particular ceremony of it; see to it in your own way, and settle it how you will among yourselves; for I know the design of my office too well to interfere on such an occasion, and will be no judge of these matters which are so foreign to it. And with this wise and determinate answer, to which he adhered notwithstanding all their clamorous importunity, he drove them away from the tribunal, and proceeded to other business.

17 And all the crowd of Greeks who were present, perceiving how little favour the Jews found from the court in this tumultuous and vexatious suit to worship God contrary to the law.

14 And when Paul was now about to open his mouth, Gallio said unto the Jews, If it were a matter of wrong, or wicked lewdness, O ye Jews, reason would that I should bear with you.

15 But if it be a question of words and names, and of your law, look ye to it; for I will be no judge of such matters.

16 And he drove them from the judgment-seat.

17 Then all the Greeks took Sosthenes, the chief ruler of
suit, in which they plainly saw that Paul was insulted for the regards he had expressed for them, laid hold on Sosthenes the ruler of the Jewish synagogue, whom they looked upon as the chief occasion of the persecution, and beat him violently; and this was so near the place where the proconsul was sitting, that it might be said to be before the very tribunal, and under the judge's eye: But though this were certainly an irregular proceeding, Gallio did not concern himself to interpose at all in the affair; for perceiving no great mischief was like to follow, he was willing, by his connivance, to leave so troublesome a plaintiff as Sosthenes, to feel some of the consequences of that confusion which his own bigotry and ill-nature had occasioned.

**IMPROVEMENT.**

Much of the divine wisdom and goodness is seen in providing Ver. for those who are employed in the work of the gospel, suitable associates and companions in their labours; and particularly happy are they to whom God had been pleased to give, as to the pious Aquila, such a companion in the nearest relation of life, as may help them forward in the way to heaven, and may assist them in the service of religion, while they continue on earth. Much were the fatigues of Paul's life softened by the converse of such friends, who no doubt rendered the common business of life more pleasant, as well as the work of the Lord more delightful.

We find them, while endeavouring to propagate the gospel, maintaining themselves (for reasons peculiar to that situation) by the labour of their own hands, and even Paul the apostle wrought with them; not because he had not a right to demand support, for he strenuously maintains that right at large, in his address to these very Corinthians, (1 Cor. ix. 1—14.) but to shame his mean-spirited enemies, who accused him of acting on mercenary views; and

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\[m\] It might be said to be before the very tribunal.] One cannot imagine, that Gallio so little understood the dignity of his office, as to suffer a person uncondemned to be scourged or beaten with rods in his immediate presence. I apprehend therefore, that, as neither the word μαχαίρα, nor ψηλαῖος, is used, but ραβδίον, whose signification is more general, the real case was, that just as Sosthenes came out of the court, which perhaps might be held in some open place, (see John xviii. 25, 29. Vol. ii. p. 736: and John xix. 12, with note \* on that place, ibid. p. 395,) the mob laid hold of him in a riotous manner, and beat him, probably with their fists; and, though the noise of this tumult, and some flying report of the assault on Sosthenes, might reach Gallio's ear, while he sat on the dispatch of some other business, he did not seem to take any notice of it for the reasons suggested in the paraphrase.
Reflections on Paul's zeal to propagate the gospel.

and because he thought in his conscience, on some other accounts, that his fidelity to Christ would be so much the more apparent, and his labours by this means so much the more successful. And what faithful minister, who in his conscience apprehended that to be the case, would not choose to act as he did?

In the mean time, he was engaged as usual every sabbath-day, in discoursing to the Jews, and in demonstrating to them the truth of the gospel; and it is pleasant and edifying to observe, with what earnestness he applied himself to do it: But their in-veterate prejudices prevailed over all the cogency of his demonstration, and all the warmth of his address; so that he was forced at length to give them up as incorrigible. Yet let us observe how he gave them up: with what grief, mixed with just indignation at their folly and ingratitude; shaking his garment, and saying, Your blood be upon your own heads! I am clean.—Thy are impenitent unbelievers their own murderers; they bring upon themselves even the blood of their own souls: grievous it is that it should rest upon them; but absolutely necessary that we, who are the messengers of God to them, should take heed, that if they must after all bleed by the sword of divine justice, we ourselves may at least be found pure; for terrible beyond expression would it be, if by our treachery or neglect their blood should be required at our hand.

The apostle's success among the Gentiles raised new opposition, and his infirmities frequently occasioned returning fears: But how graciously did our Lord interpose for his encouragement and support, assuring him of his protection, and promising him yet more abundant success! Blessed Jesus, thy grace was sufficient even for this thy servant, amidst all the labours of the ministerial and apostolical office, amidst all the internal as well as external difficulties he had to encounter in the discharge of it! (2 Cor. xii. 9.) May that grace be imparted to us; and may it appear that thou hast much people, wherever thou fixest the bounds of our habitation, and the sphere of our ministry!

The tumultuous rage of the Jews is nothing surprising, for we have been accustomed often to read of it; but the prudence and moderation of Gallio is truly amiable: That wise Roman well knew the extent of his office as a magistrate, and was aware that it gave him no title, no pretence, to dictate in matters of conscience, or to restrain men's religious liberties, so long as they abstained from injustice or mischievous licentiousness, by which the public peace might be disturbed, and the rights of society invaded. May God give to all the magistrates of the earth such a spirit! and the gospel, under the influences of divine grace, will soon become an universal religion, and shew the world how little need it has of bei-
Paul departs from Corinth with Aquila and Priscilla.

ing supported by civil penalties; to which those are generally most ready to have recourse, who, like these Jews, are confounded by fair argument.

SECT. XLII.

Paul departs from Corinth, and calling at Ephesus by the way, goes to Jerusalem: He afterwards sets out from Antioch on another progress, and visits the churches in Galatia and Phrygia. Apollos preaches at Ephesus, and being farther instructed in the Christian doctrine goes to Achaia. Acts XVIII. 18, to the end.

Acts XVIII. 18.

And Paul after this tarried there yet a good while, and then took his leave of the brethren, and sailed thence into Syria, and with him Priscilla and Aquila; having shorn his head in Cenchrea; for he had a vow.

Acts XVIII. 18.

Thus the tumultuous opposition that was raised at Corinth by the Jews, against the progress of the gospel, was appeased; and Paul still continued there for a considerable time after it; and then taking leave of the brethren, with whom he had made so long and comfortable an abode, he sailed from thence in his return for Syria, and took along with him his two intimate friends Priscilla and Aquila; having shorn his head at the port of Cenchrea in the neighbourhood of Corinth, before he began his voyage, for he had made a vow of doing it, on account of some extraordinary deliverance received; and there he performed it.

And

a Having shorn his head at Cenchrea, for he had a vow.] Grotius, Heinsius, Dr. Hammond and Witsius, (M. le tem. p. 99—101,) think this clause refers to Aquila who was mentioned immediately before; and some of them suppose that he and his wife Priscilla were left, not at Ephesus, but at Cenchrea; and Chrysostom interpreted the clause thus. But with due deference to such great names, I must say, that, though it be not certainly determined by the original, it seems much more probable from the construction, that a and must refer to the same person, that is, Paul; nor is there any weight in what some have suggested, that Aquila is mentioned here after his wife Priscilla, to shew that it was he that shaven his head, since they are mentioned twice by the apostle Paul in his epistles, (Rom. xvi. 3. 1 Cor. xvi. 19. 2 Tim. iv. 19.) and where there could be no such reason to induce him to it, he has twice named Priscilla first; and, as it appears from ver. 26, that Aquila and Priscilla were at Ephesus when Apollos was there, and from ver. 18, that they set out with Paul from Corinth to make the intended voyage in his company, it is most likely, they went now to Ephesus, and were not left at Cenchrea. As for this vow, it is justly observed by Salmasius, that it could not be a vow of Nazaritish, for then the hair must have been burnt in the temple under the chaldron in which the peace-offerings were boiled. (Numb. vi. 18.) Petit thinks, the mention of his vow relates only to Paul’s return to Judea, and not at all to his shaving his head, which words he would include in a parenthesis, supposing the Jews at Corinth wore their hair long, directly contrary to 1 Cor. xi. 14. I rather think, his vow was an expression of gratitude for the divine goodness, in preserving him from such imminent dangers during his long abode here; but, whether he now cut off his hair, vowing from this time to let it grow till he came to Jerusalem, or whether some accidental pollution befell him here, which obliged him to do it, that he might begin the day of his purification again, or whether his vow terminated here, I cannot certainly say; yet the last seems to me most probable; for the expression, he had a vow, seems
And setting sail from Cenchrea he arrived at Ephesus, and there he parted with Aquila and Priscilla, and left them behind him, having made but a very short stay in that place; but during that time he himself entered into the synagogue on the sabbath which he spent there, and reasoned with the Jews upon the great subject of Jesus being the Messiah. And though they were desirous of hearing more upon this head, and therefore intreated him to have stayed longer with them yet he did not consent to do it: but took his leave of them, saying, It is necessary for me by all means to celebrate the approaching feast of the passover at Jerusalem; but when I have dispatched my business there, I will turn my course to you again, God willing, and make as long an abode amongst you as Providence shall permit. And so he set sail from Ephesus.

And after a safe and prosperous voyage landing at the port of Caesarea, he went up immediately to Jerusalem, and there attended at the feast: and having with great tenderness saluted the church there, and expressed his kindness and affection to it, and delivered the alms which he had brought from the churches of the Gentiles, he afterwards went down from thence to Antioch in Syria, where he had formerly made so long a stay, and where there was so flourishing a Christian church.

And having spent some time [there] he again set out upon another progress, and departed from Antioch, going through the country of Galatia

seems not to agree with the supposition of his beginning it here; nor could he on any accidental occasion have renewed his purification as a Nazarite any where but at the temple. (Num. vi. 9, 10.) I imagine therefore, that (unless as Grotius and Dr. Lardner suppose, the Jews allowed themselves great liberties in this matter, when in foreign countries,) Mephibosheth's vow during David's exile (2 Sam. xix. 24) might more nearly resemble this of Paul. Spencer has shewn in his excellent dissertation on the Nazarite's vow, (De Leg. Heb. lib. iii. cap. 6, § 1,) that the Gentiles, as well as the Jews, had such a custom. Dr. Lardner thinks, that Paul's reason for hastening to Jerusalem was, that he might accomplish his vow; but I see not how that could be any reason, why he should keep the feast there, since the vow might have been accomplished, either before or after it. (See Dr. Lardner's Chro. Book I. chap. 9, § 7, Vol. I. p. 465—472.)

b And there he left them.] It is observable, that the Syriac Version inserts this clause afterwards in ver. 21, which seems its most natural place: "And he left Aquila and Priscilla there, and sailed from Ephesus."

c It is necessary for me by all means, &c.] This was not from any apprehension, that he was obliged in conscience to celebrate the Jewish feasts, (compare Rom. xiv. 5. Gal. iv. 10, 11. Col. ii. 16.) but because he desired to seize that opportunity of meeting a greater number of his countrymen at Jerusalem, to whom he might preach the gospel, or whom, if already converted, he might farther instruct, or might remove the prejudices that were groundlessly imbibed against him.
over all the country of Galatia and Phrygia in order, strengthening all the disciples.

24 And a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man, and mighty in the scriptures, came to Ephesus. This man was instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in spirit, he spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptism of John. And he began to speak boldly in the synagogue. Whom when

Apollos is instructed at Ephesus by Aquila and Priscilla.

latia and Phrygia in an orderly and regular manner, so as to take in all the places that lay in his way, where he had formerly preached the gospel; confirming all the disciples that he met with there in their adherence to the gospel, whatever opposition and difficulty might arise: And his presence was most welcome to all their churches, who could not but greatly rejoice to see him amongst them, who as a father had been gotten them in Jesus Christ through the gospel. (Compare 1. Cor. iv. 15.)

Now while he was thus employed in those parts a certain Jew whose name was Apollos, a native of Alexandria in Egypt, an eloquent man, [and] powerful in the scriptures of the Old Testament, which he had diligently studied, and had an excellent faculty of expounding, came to Ephesus. This person was in some measure already instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in spirit, and earnestly desirous to promote the progress of truth, and the conversion of souls, he spake and taught the things of the Lord with great accuracy and exactness, to the best of his knowledge; though as yet he had but an imperfect notion of the gospel, being only acquainted with the baptism of John; so that he insisted upon the doctrine of repentance, and faith in a Messiah who was quickly to be revealed, for the reception of whom he shewed that it was necessary they should have their hearts prepared. And to this purpose he began to speak boldly in the synagogue, pleading the cause of God and real vital religion, with an earnestness becoming the importance of his undertaking. (See Chuddie's Apoc. Hist. p. 127.)

6 Going through the country of Galatia, and Phrygia, &c.] Probably he passed through part of Cilicia, Cappadocia, and Lycaonia, which all lay in his way from Antioch. As this would take him up a great deal of time, most commentators (I think very reasonably,) allow four years for this journey, including his stay at Ephesus; that is, from the year 54 to 38.— Coming to Galatia, he gave those directions concerning charitable contributions, referred to 1 Cor. xvi. 1, 2, and I shall afterwards mention the reasons which convince me, that he wrote his First Epistle to the Corinthians in this period, that is, probably during his stay at Ephesus. See sect. xiii.

6 Being only acquainted with the baptism of John.] It is generally supposed, he had been in Judea when John was baptizing, and having been baptized by him into the faith of a Messiah shortly to appear, on hearing something more of the gospel, he believed in Christ under that character, but had not yet been baptized in the name of Christ, nor received the gifts of the Spirit, which were often miraculously communicated in that ordinance. (Compare Chudrie's Apoc. Hist. p. 127.) If this was indeed the case, as John the Baptist was beheld more than twenty years before this time, Apollos could not now be, as is generally supposed, though I think no where asserted, a young man; and consequently, his condescension in submitting to the instructions of these private Christians is the more remarkable, and the more amiable.

M 3
ance of the subject, as well as freely reproving the Jews for those evils which were so commonly to be found among them, and battering down those vain hopes which, as the seed of Abraham and disciples of Moses, they were so ready to entertain. And Aquila and Priscilla, being then at Ephesus, and hearing him express so upright and so good a spirit, were desirous to promote his farther improvement in knowledge and usefulness; and accordingly they took him with them to their house, and there explained to him the way of God in a more complete and perfect manner.

27 And shortly after, when he intended to go over to Achaia, that he might preach the word at Corinth and other places in that province, the brethren of Ephesus wrote to the disciples there exhorting them to receive him with all affection and respect, as a person whose character well deserved it: And being arrived there, he greatly helped those who had believed through grace, and was eminently serviceable in establishing and confirming those who had embraced the gospel.

IMPROVE-

"He greatly helped those who had believed through grace.] Mr. L'Enfant and Limborch render it, "He was, through the grace of God, a great help to those that had received the faith." But this, though I think it don't greatly affect the sense, seems an unnecessary transposition. The best comment on these words is what we are told elsewhere, (1 Cor. iii. 6,) "Paul planted, and Apollos watered, but God gave the increase." It is indeed true, both that the Corinthians had believed through grace, and that through grace Apollos helped them: The latter strongly implies the former; and the original words may possibly speak either: But the transposition fixes them, which I think should not be done; and fixes them, if I mistake not, to the less probable sense. It appears from many passages in Paul's Epistle to the Corinthians, that several of the Christians there, charmed with the eloquence of Apollos, were ready to set him up as the head of a party, and to make invidious and foolish comparisons between him and the apostle, who had been their father in Christ, and who, though he might have less volubility of speech, was on the most important accounts for superior to this eloquent and zealous teacher. (See 1 Cor. i. 12. iii. 4—8, 21, 22. iv. 6.) Yet this occasioned no breach between Paul and Apollos; the latter of which plainly appears to have come to Ephesus when Paul returned thither, and to have declined going to Corinth again, even when Paul would have persuaded him to it; probably to avoid any the remotest appearance of desiring to countenance any party, that might have been formed in his own favour. 1 Cor. xvi. 12.

27 And when he was disposed to pass into Achaia, the brethren wrote, exhorting the disciples to receive him: who, when he was come, helped them much which had believed through grace.

28 For he mightily convinced the Jews, and that publicly, shewing by the scriptures, that Jesus was Christ.
How happy was the church in those unwearied labours of Paul! And how happy was Paul in those repeated opportunities, and in that health and spirit which God gave him, to undertake and to go through with such labours! Happy in preaching Christ to so many, to whom he was before unknown! Happy in beholding the blessed fruits of his labour, and visiting the churches he had formerly planted in one province and another, and which in this intermediate space was grown up to some maturity! Prudent likewise, in such a concern to water those plants by renewed instruction: So let gospel-ministers cherish the divine life in those souls where they have been instrumental to produce it; ever remembering, that it is a matter of so great importance as well deserves our repeated care and our renewed labours.

Well was it also for the churches, that such a promising and hopeful fellow-labourer as Apollos was raised up to him, and to them. To be fervent and courageous in spirit, to be eloquent and mighty in the Scriptures, are happy talents for such as are to be devoted to the ministry. May all that enter on this work among us, come forth with a zeal and courage like his; and I must add, may they also come forth with an humility like that which, in Apollos, adorned all those bright talents with which he was endow-ed! What he knew, he zealously taught; what he did not know, he was willing and ready thankfully to learn; and that not only from the mouth of an apostle, but of a fellow-christian in inferior life; from Aquila, yea and from Priscilla too. Since God had given that wise and pious woman to know the way of the Lord, by longer experience and to greater perfection than he, Apollos, amidst all his popularity and applause, was willing to become her disciple; and to learn from her in private discourses, those evangelical lessons which decency did not permit her to give, or him to receive, in public assemblies.

It was prudent in Apollos to take, as well as just in the brethren to grant proper letters of recommendation, when he was going to the churches in Achaia, where he was a stranger; and well did he answer this recommendation, and make himself known amongst them by valuable services: Mighty as he was in the scriptures of the Old Testament, he might well demonstrate from them to the Jews at Corinth, that Jesus was the Messiah; and happy would it have been for the church and the synagogue there, had they known no distinguishing name but his: Nevertheless, one said, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos. (1 Cor. iii. 4.)

We
We may reasonably hope, that this zealous evangelist expressed the same displeasure which the holy apostle himself did on such an occasion; and laboured with all his might to impress them with the thought, that neither he that planted nor he that watered was any thing, but God who gave the increase to both. May it be impressed deeper on the hearts both of ministers and people, that all the glory may be rendered to him from whom all our gifts, and graces, and successes proceed.

SECT. XLIII.

Paul in his circuit coming to Ephesus, instructs some of John's disciples whom he found there, performs extraordinary miracles, and preaches the word with great success. Acts XIX. 1.—20.

Acts XIX. 1.

NOW it came to pass, that while the eloquent Apollos, of whom we have just been speaking, was at Corinth, and was entertaining them there with the charms of his oratory as well as the strength of his reasoning, Paul having passed (as was observed before, chap. xviii. 23) through Galatia and Phrygia, and visited the upper parts of the Lesser Asia, came to the celebrated city of Ephesus, according to his promise, (chap. xviii. 19—21,) with a purpose of making some stay in it; and finding there some disciples, in whom he did not observe any of those extraordinary gifts which he had discovered in, or communicated to, so many others; He said unto them, Have ye as yet on your believing received the Holy Spirit? and have the gifts that are bestowed by the effusion of the Spirit been imparted to you? And they strangely replied to him,

*Finding there some disciples, &c.] Beza has a singular opinion concerning these persons. He thinks, they are almost the whole body of Christians at Ephesus, and that, as Paul found they had none among them who appeared to have received the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit, (of which gifts indeed they had never so much as heard,) he imparted them in twelve of the number, perhaps intending them for stations of some peculiar eminence in the church.

But this account of the matter must, I think, appear very improbable, when it is considered, that Aquila and Priscilla, who came from the Corinthian church, so eminent for its spiritual gifts, had made some abode at Ephesus, and that Apollos, after he had profited by their instructions, would probably preach in the synagogue there, before he left the place; (chap. xviii. 19, 25, 26,) which if he did, it can never be imagined he would be silent on this head. I conclude therefore, these twelve men were pious Jews, who, having waited for the kingdom of God, and being many years before baptized by John or some of his disciples, had, on receiving something of the evidence of Christianity, believed in Jesus, but, perhaps coming out of some remote country, had not enjoyed an opportunity before, of being instructed in any thing relating to the Holy Spirit, more than might be learned from the Old Testament.

And
And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost.

3 And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism.

4 Then said Paul to them, Upon what authority do ye thus baptize? It is not as yet made known unto John, whom ye baptized, whether he be greater than he.

5 When they heard this, they were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus.

6 And when Paul had

b And hearing this, they were baptized, &c.] Mr L'Enfant has followed the opinion of many great critics, in rendering this verse, as a continuance of Paul's discourse, and not as the words of Luke, as if it had been said, "John indeed baptized with the baptism of repentance, &c. but they who heard him, and paid a proper regard to his ministry, were, in effect, baptized into the name of Jesus, since he was the Messiah, whom John spake of as shortly to appear;" and the correspondence, which is everywhere else said to be found between the particles πρῶτος and ἕτερος, is urged as a demonstration, that the 4th and 5th verses must make one continued sentence. The learned Beza expresses himself with an unusual confidence on this head, and concludes, as I think all who follow this interpretation do, that Paul did not baptize these converts anew, but only declared his acquiescence in the sufficiency of the baptism they had already received, by imparting to them the gifts of the Spirit. But I think it evident, beyond all dispute, that the baptism of John and of Christ were in their own nature quite different, and that it is plain in fact, that, when persons were converted to Christianity, they were baptized of course, without inquiring whether they had,
Paul teaches in the synagogue at Ephesus.

Immediately after the administration of this solemn ordinance, Paul, laying [his] hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them; and they spake with new tongues, which they had never learnt or understood before, and prophesied in such a manner to the edification of the church, as plainly shewed they were enriched at once in all utterance and in all knowledge. And they were in all about twelve men, who had the happiness of being thus miraculously furnished with the gifts of the Spirit.

And Paul, as he was used to do in other places, went into the synagogue of the Jews at Ephesus, and discoursed with great boldness and freedom, disputing for the space of three months’, with all that opposed him, and strongly evincing the things which related to the kingdom of God, erected in the world under Jesus the Messiah.

But as some of the Jews were hardened, and would not believe, but still continued in their infidelity and rebellion, speaking reproachfully of the way of salvation which the apostle taught, before the multitude, and doing their utmost to inspire them with a contempt for it, he departed from them, and separated the disciples he had made, disputing daily for the time to come with all those who debated his doctrine in the school of one Tyrannus. And this was done by Paul, and had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied.

And all the men were about twelve.

And he went into the synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of three months, disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God.

But when divers were hardened, and believed not, but spake evil of that way before the multitude, he departed from them, and separated the disciples, disputing daily in the school of one Tyrannus.

And this continued.

Luke had not received the baptism of John, which we know vast numbers did, (Matt iii. 5, 6,) who probably afterwards received Christian baptism. Compare Acts xii. 19, iv. 4, 6. And therefore, if I were assured the construction of these two verses were that which these gentlemen insist upon, I should interpret the 5th verse in a sense quite contrary to theirs, as if it was said, “But they who paid a due regard to John, when they came more explicitly to understand who the promised Messiah was, were baptized into the name of Jesus, as you therefore must be, in order to a regular admissitce into his church?” And then I should suppose, Luke, having given this intimation of the baptism of these converts, which must of course follow such a declaration of Paul, left us to collect that for ourselves, and only mentioned the communication of spiritual gifts to them on their being thus baptized. But on the whole,—as the expression is not of ἐν ὄνομα, but ἐν τῷ ὄνομα, seems so plainly to refer to the persons just before said to be baptized, and as it is so natural to suppose, that Luke should not omit to mention the baptism of these men, I rather conclude, that there is an ellipsis in the 4th verse, (though I own it not a very common one,) so that τοῦ ὀνόματος Ἰησοῦ is put for ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι τοῦ Ἰησοῦ (as if the expression were, But he said to the people at the same time, that they should believe in Jesus;) and the article ἦν might more probably be omitted by Luke, as it is used three times besides, in these three verses.

For the space of three months.] The late Lord Barrington supposes, (Miscel. Sac. Abtr., p. 23,) that, after Paul had been some time at Ephesus, he visited the neighbouring towns of Asia, and then returned to Ephesus again.—And it seems not improbable, that the foundation of some others of the seven churches in Asia, so particularly favoured with the Titles of our Lord, might now be laid: Compare ver. 10.

In the school of one Tyrannus.] I cannot think there is any reason to conclude, as Sir Norton Knatchbull does out of regard to the article τοῦ, that the word εὐαγγελίζω expresses the rank rather than the
He worketh great miracles, which the exorcists also attempt.

and was his daily practice for the space of two years; so that all the inhabitants of the neighbouring provinces of Asia, both Jews and Greeks, heard the word of the Lord Jesus, though for some peculiar reason he had been forbidden to preach it there in his former journey. (Chap. xvi. 6.)

And to add the greater efficacy and success to this important doctrine, God wrought many extraordinary and uncommon miracles by the hands of Paul, So that, besides his curing those that were brought to him, handkerchiefs or aprons were carried from his body to those that were sick at a distance, and presently upon their touching them, the disease they were troubled with, however threatening or inveterate they were, removed from them, and the evil spirits themselves came out of them that were possessed; which soon raised the reputation of the apostles to a very high degree, and added the authority of a divine attestation to what he taught the Ephesians.

And

the name of the person, and therefore to render it, "A certain nobleman, or ruler of the city," since it is so evident, that in Luke's writings πατὴρ is often added to a proper name. Compare Acts xxii. 16. xxii. 12. xxiv. 1. xxv. 19.—It seems a groundless conceit, that this was the Tyrannus, mentioned by Suidas, who wrote on popular seditions, or that it refers (as others think) to one of the descendants of Androclus, mentioned by Strabo, who had an hereditary title in his family. (Strab. Geogr. lib. xiv. ind.) The name might be frequent among them, as King is amongst us; and this Tyrannus might very probably be a converted Jew, and the school referred to, a kind of Bethsaida, or divinity-hall, designed for reading theological lectures, as Dr. Lightfoot supposes Chron. in loc.)

This was done for the space of two years.] The very learned and ingenious Mr. Boyse argues from chap. xx. 31. that Paul spent three years at Ephesus and in the neighbouring towns of Asia, and therefore concludes, that this clause expresses the time between the end of the three months, ver. 8, and his sending Timothy and Erastus to Macedonia, ver. 22. but that, as he stayed nine months longer in these parts, towards the end of which he returned to Ephesus, they might perhaps, both return thither before he quitted it, and consequently, that he might have left Timothy at Ephesus, when he was driven from thence, (chap. xx. 1.) and so have written his First Epistle to him before the meeting at Miletus, chap. xx. 17. (See Mr. Boyse of Episcopacy, p. 335.)—I must add here, that to render ἐκκλησίας (i. e. Greeks) at the end of this verse, proselytes, is an unexampled boldness in a late translator, and quite misrepresents the sense of the passage.

Handkerchiefs, or aprons, ἀκραία τῶν συμβασίων.] These two Latin words, for such they originally are, have been differently rendered: but the etymology of the first plainly determines it to signify a piece of linen, with which the sweat was wiped from the face, and though the latter may possibly signify drawers, which is the interpretation preferred by Calmet, (Disser. Vol. II. p. 232.) yet as I do not find the ancients wore such a habit, and as it may most literally be rendered things girl half round the waist, I choose, with Grotius, and our translators, to use the word aprons; for though aprons made no part of the ordinary dress of the Greeks, yet they might very probably have been used, both by men and women to preserve their clothes, while engaged in any kind of work that might endanger the spoiling them.—It is justly observed by many writers, that these cures wrought upon absent persons, some of them perhaps at a considerable distance from Ephesus, might conduce greatly to the success of the gospel among those, whose faces Paul had not him elf seen.
And while he abode there, some of the vagabond Jews [who were] professed exorcists, and pretended to a power of expelling daemons, undertook to name the name of the Lord Jesus over those who had evil spirits, and were possessed by them, saying, We adjure you by Jesus, whom Paul preaches, to come out of those whom you now posses. And so it was, that there were seven sons of [one] Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, who did this, desirous of the honour or profit which they thought would redound from such cures, and imagining there was some secret charm in the name of Jesus, to which these infernal agents would submit. But the evil spirit answering their adjuration with contempt, boldly said, Jesus I know to my cost, and Paul I know as his appointed servant, whose power I cannot resist; but who are ye, that pretend thus without any authority to command me in that tremendous name? And the man in whom the evil spirit was sprung upon them, and quickly getting master of them all, prevailed against them to such a degree as to tear off their clothes from their backs, and beat them with great violence, so that they fled out of that house in which they had attempted to cure, naked and wounded, and became public spectacles of scorn and derision, in a city where these things were peculiarly regarded.

And this was done in such a public manner, that it soon became known to all the Jews and Greeks also dwelling at Ephesus; and they were so affected with the thought of so remarkable and awful an occurrence, that great fear fell upon them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified. And those who had formerly been professors of unwarrantable arts, which they rather than such as adjure them by a divine name.

And the evil spirit answering, and said, Jesus I know, and Paul I know, but who are ye?

And the man in whom the evil spirit was, leapt on them, and overcame them, and prevailed against them so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded.

And this was known to all the Jews and Greeks also dwelling at Ephesus; and fear fell on them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified.

And many that believed
believed came, and confessed, and shewed their deeds.

19 Many also of them which used curious arts, brought their books together, and burned them before all men, and they counted the price of them, and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver.

20 So mightily grew the word of God, and prevailed.

they had diligently studied, as the means of helping them to do extraordinary things by the power of magic, and the assistance of invisible agents, were now so sensible of their wickedness and folly, that many of them who believed, struck with this triumph of the evil spirit over the sons of Sceva, came of their own accord, and publicly confessed and made a declaration of their unlawful deeds of this kind. And a considerable number of those who had practised magical and curious arts, to express their detestation of them, bringing their books together, burnt them before all who were present; And as it was observed that there were a great many of them which bore a high price in that place, they computed the value of them, and found that it amounted to fifty thousand drachmas, which were the pieces of silver most current in those parts. So powerfully did the word of the Lord grow and prevail, and so remarkable was the triumph of the gospel over all considerations of honour or interest, that could be opposed to it on this or on any other occasion.

IMPROVEMENT.

Thus may the word of God still grow and prevail wherever it comes, and separate between the sinner and his sins, be they ever so customary, ever so reputable, ever so gainful: And thus may the flame of love and zeal consume every snare which hath detained the soul in a base captivity to it.

In order to the production of so noble an effect, may those who are so indifferent to his sacred operations, as if they had never yet heard there was an Holy Spirit, be filled with it, and be made obedient to it: And may they to whom the mysteries of the gospel are committed, declare them boldly, whoever may be hardened, who ever

1 Who had practised curious arts.] Philostratus, Chrysostom, and a variety of more ancient authors, quoted by many, and especially by Mr. Boyle, (at Boyle's Lect. chap. viii. § 1, p. 290—293, have mentioned the Ephesian letters, meaning by them the charms, and other arts of a magical kind, which the inhabitants of that city professed; and, as these practices were in so much reputation there, it is no wonder, that the books that taught them, how contemptible soever they might be in themselves, should bear a considerable price.

2 Fifty thousand pieces of silver.] If these be taken for Jewish shekels, and valued at three shillings each, (which are the principles of Dr. Benson's computation, Hist. Vol. II. p. 149,) the sum will amount to 7500l. Sterling, or, setting it at half a crown, to 6250: But, as the Attic drachm seems to have been more frequently used among the Greeks, than any coin equal to the Jewish shekel, I think it more natural to compute by that, which, if with Dr. Prideaux we reckon it at 9d. reduces the sum to 1573l.
ever may oppose, and how evil soever some who boast of their knowledge of God may speak of this way.

11, 12 We cannot expect that the miracles of Paul's days should be renewed in ours, but we may humbly hope that the noblest effects of his preaching will be renewed; that dead souls will be quickened, the languishing revived, and evil spirits cast out from men's minds; where their possession is more fatal and dangerous than in their bodies.

13, 14 And God grant that none may ever undertake to invoke the name of Jesus upon such occasions, or to appear under the character of his servants, who have not cordially believed in him themselves, and received their commission from him! We need not wonder if in such a case, like these sons of Sceva they meddle to their own wounding, and prove the means of irritating rather than curing those disorders which the influence of Satan has introduced, and which the Spirit of Christ alone can effectually remove.

SECT. XLIV.

Paul is driven from Ephesus, on occasion of a tumult which Demetrius raises, and the Chancellor prudently appeases. Acts XIX. 21, to the end.

Acts XIX. 21. Now after the extraordinary cures and conversions at Ephesus, which have been mentioned in the preceding section, when these things were fulfilled, Paul, who was much concerned about

Acts XIX. 21. After these things were ended, Paul purposed in the Spirit, when he had passed through

*When these things were fulfilled.] Many events referred to in the Epistles happened during the period. It is probable, that Philemon, a convert of Paul, (Philem. ver. 19,) and Epaphras, afterwards a minister of the church at Colossæ, were converted about this time. (Col. i. 4, 7, 8; ii. 1; iv. 12, 13.) The apostle was also visited by several Christians from neighbouring parts, during his abode here, particularly by Sosthenes and Apollos from Corinth, and by some of the family of Chloe, a woman as it seems of some figure there. (1 Cor. i. 1, 11,) as also by Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaius, all from the same place; (1 Cor. xvi. 17,) and Onesiphorus, who afterwards visited him so affectionately at Rome, was, as Timothy had frequently opportunities of observing, very serviceable to the apostle here. (2 Tim. i. 16—18.) And there is great reason to believe, he wrote his First Epistle to the Corinthians from hence, (1 Cor. xvi. 8,) and about this time; for it is plain, that Aquila and Priscilla were then with him in Asia, (1 Cor. xvi. 19,) as they now were, (Acts xviii. 18, 19, 26,) that it was after Apollos had visited Corinth, had watered Paul's plantation there, and was returned to Ephesus again, (1 Cor. iii. 6; xvi. 8, 12,) and that it was when Paul himself, having lately given a charge to the Galatian churches on that head, (compare 1 Cor. xvi. 1, 2, with Acts xviii. 23,) intended a journey from Asia to the Macedonian and Corinthian churches, and was sending Timothy to prepare his way. (1 Cor. iv. 17, 19; xvi. 5, 10; compared with the verse now before us, and that which follows.)—Hence it appears, that no dependence can be had on the spurious editions at the end of the Epistle, which do not only tell us, that he wrote to the Galatians from Rome, contrary to the probability there is that he wrote it from
And stays himself in Asia.

through Macedonia and Achaia, to go to Jerusalem, saying, After I have been there, I must also see Rome.

about the spiritual welfare of his former converts, and very solicitous to promote the progress of the gospel, had thoughts of leaving Ephesus, and purposed in spirit, that first passing through Macedonia and Achaia, where he had planted so many flourishing churches some time ago, at Philippi, Thessalonica, Athens, Corinth, and other places, he would then go to Jerusalem; saying, After I have been there, it is necessary for me also to see Rome, that I may bear my testimony to the gospel in that metropolis of the world: And accordingly Providence brought him thither, though in a manner something different from what he first intended. And in this view, sending two of those that ministered to him, namely, Timothy and Erastus, into Macedonia, to prepare his way, and to get their collection ready for the poor Christians in Judea, he himself stayed some time longer in that part of Asia, waiting for a convenient opportunity of following them.

And there happened about that time no small tumult, concerning that way of worshipping God, and securing a happy immortality, which Paul taught. For there was in the city a man whose name was Demetrius, by profession a working silversmith, and a man of considerable influence; for, making small silver shrines, which were models of the celebrated temple of Diana there, he employed a considerable number of men

from Corinth, (as was hinted before, note on Acts xvii. 11,) but also affirm, in spite of his own declaration to the contrary, that he wrote the First to the Corinthians from Philippi.

a Paul purposed in spirit.] It is not certain from the original, ὑπέταξεν τῷ πνεύματι, whether this relate to a determination he was moved to by the Holy Spirit, by whom he was directed in his journeys, or (as Beza and Grotius suppose,) to a purpose he formed in his own mind. But as we find that he delayed the execution of it, and was by several circumstances led to alter his intended course, and to continue longer in his progress than he first designed, it seems more reasonable to refer it to his own spirit, nor is it unusual to insert the article, where it only relates to the human spirit. (See Acts xvi. 16; Rom. i. 9; viii. 16; 1 Cor. ii. 11; v. 5; vi. 20; Gal. vi. 18; Eph. iv. 22; Gr.) Accordingly Beza renders it, Statuit spud se, and Stephens, Induxit in animum.

c Sending—Timothy and Erastus.] Timothy was a person very proper to be employed on this occasion, not only on account of his excellent character, but also as he had formerly been in Macedonia with Paul, and had assisted in planting the churches there. (Acts, chap. xvi. and xvii.) Erastus, who was joined with him, was chamberlain of Corinth; Rom. xvi. 23,) and they were charged with a commission to promote the collection, which Paul was making, both in the European and Asiatic churches, (1 Cor. xvi. 1, 3; Gal. ii. 10,) for the poor Christians in Judea, which afterwards so largely urged in the Second Epistle to the Corinthians, (chap. viii. and ix.)

E The working silversmith, making silver shrines of Diana.] Dr. Hammond long since gave it as his opinion, that these shrines were little models of this famous temple, probably something like those of the church of the Holy Sepulchre brought from Jerusalem; and Mr. Bisce has added
men under him, and procured no small gain to
the several artificers by this means: Whom
therefore he one day, upon a general summons,
gathered together in a great number, with all
the inferior workmen who were employed about
this business; and when they were met, he said,
My friends, and all you honest men that now
hear me, you very well know that our mainte-
nance (which, thanks be to the gods is a very lib-
eral one) arises from this manufacture of mak-
ing silver shrines. And therefore I thought it
proper to call you together, that we may unite
our counsels for its security, against the danger
that threatens the whole company, of which I
am satisfied you cannot but be sensible: For you
all see and hear, that this Paul of Tarsus, who
has unhappily resided so long amongst us, has
persuaded great numbers of people, not only of
Ephesus, but almost of all the provinces of Asia,
as they have occasionally visited us, and has
turned them aside from the established religion,
saying that they are not true deities, nor worthy
of being at all worshipped or regarded, which are
made with hands: So that, if this be suffered
any longer, there is danger not only that this
occupation of ours should be depreciated and ruin-
ed, which must be the necessary consequence of
his success, but also that the celebrated temple of
the great goddess Diana should be despised, and
her grandeur destroyed, whom now all Asia and
the small gain unto the
craftsmen:
25 Whom he called
together with the
workmen of like oc-
cupation, and said,
Sirs, ye know that by
this craft we have our
wealth.

26 Moreover, ye see
and hear, that not a-
one at Ephesus, but
almost throughout all
Asia, this Paul hath
persuaded and turned
away much people,
saying, That they be
no gods which are
made with hands:

27 So that not only
this our craft is in
danger to be set at
mought; but also that
the temple of the
great goddess Diana
should be despised, and
her magnificence
should be destroyed,
whom

added many learned quotations to illus-
trate and confirm that opinion. (Boyle's
Lect. chap viii. § 3, p. 300—302.) See
also Rophe ex Herod. p. 380; and ex
Xen. p. 175—177. Yet after all, the
mention of these models is not so express,
as absolutely to exclude Beza's conjecture,
that the business of Demetrius
might possibly be, making a sort of coins,
or medals, on the reverse of which the
temple might be represented. He has
given us a cut of one of these, in which
the image itself, with its various rows of
breasts, is exhibited as seen through the
open doors of a temple. It is possible,
this company of workmen might take in
those that wrought in all these sacred
commodities, and likewise those, that
made a kind of pageants intended for
public processions, in which Diana was
represented in a kind of movable chapel
resembling her great temple, in a larger
proportion than these supposed models,
fo which some passages of antiquity un-
doubtedly refer, and which the Romans
called themae.

* Great numbers of people, not only of Eph-
esus, but almost of all Asia.] Dr. Whitby ob-
erves, this is the exact rendering of the
words Ephesus,—the Aανος νομος εμπορον; so
that, as the paraphrase explains it, it may
refer to what Paul had done among their
at Ephesus, which was the whole that
could have fallen under the observation of
Demetrius and the company.

[Seeing, that they are not deities, which
are made with hands.] This plainly shews,
that the contrary opinion generally pre-
vailed namely, that there was a kind of
divinity in the image of their supposed de-
ities, which Elsewe well shews, the Hea-
thenus did think; though some of them,
and particularly Maximus Tyrius, and
Julian, had learnt to speak of them just
as the Papists now do, who indeed may
seem to have borrowed some of their apolo-
gics from the Heathens. (See Elms

* When
The mob is enraged, and cries for Diana.

whom all Asia, and the whole world worshippeth. 

28. And when they heard these things, they were filled with wrath, and cried out, saying, Great is Diana of the Ephesians. 

29. And the whole city was filled with confusion; and having caught Gaius and Aristarchus, men of Macedonia, Paul’s companions in travel, they rushed with one accord into the theatre. 

30. And when Paul would have entered in unto the people, the disciples suffered him not. 

31. And certain of the chief of Asia, which were his friends, sent unto him, desiring him that he would not adventure himself into the theatre. 

the whole world worships; so that they resort hither from all parts to pay their homage to her, to the vast advantage of our whole city, and carry home with them great numbers of our shrines, to exercise their devotion at home, till they have an opportunity of coming again to worship in her temple. 

And such was the effect of what Demetrius 28 said, that upon hearing [this] they were all filled with rage; and mad to think that both their trade and their religion were in danger, they ran about the city, and cried out with great violence, saying, Great is Diana of the Ephesians. 

And this outcry of theirs gave a general alarm, 29 so that the whole city was filled with confusion: and with a wild ungovernable zeal they rushed with one accord into the theatre, where their famous games were celebrated to the honour of that deity, dragging thither Gaius and Aristarchus, two men of Macedonia, who were Paul’s fellow-travellers. 

And when Paul heard of the distress and danger of his friends, and would have gone in to the theatre to address himself to the people, that he might either bring them to a better temper, or at least get his friends discharged by surrendering himself, the disciples that were with him would not permit him so to expose his valuable person. 

And some too of the Asiarchs, (as they were called,) that is, of the principal officers chosen by the community of Asia to preside over the public games and feasts which they were used to celebrate at certain intervals in honour of their gods, as they knew Paul, and had a friendship for him, sent out some messengers to him, and earnestly desired that he would not venture 

\[\text{Acts} \text{XIX. 27.}\]

\[\text{XIV.} \]

\[\text{Vol. I. p. 401.}\]

\[\text{1 Aristarchus.}\]

This friend and companion of Paul was afterwards his fellow-prisoner at Rome in the cause of the gospel; Col. iv. 10.

\[\text{2 Some of the principal officers of Asia sent to him.}\]

It has from this and the following passage been concluded by many; that the people at Ephesus were then celebrating the public games in honour of Diana, over which these officers presided, (as Groton, Salmasius, and Dr. Hammond have largely shown;) and, as it is not probable that, in such a tumultuous hour, several of them should have sent to him at once with such a message, unless they had been in the theatre together, I cannot but declare myself of the same opinion.
Paul is advised not to venture among them.

ventures himself into the theatre, since the rage of the people was such, that if he came it would be with the utmost hazard of his life.

Some therefore, as they stood there in the theatre, were crying one thing, and some another, according as their passions led them, or as the zeal of others prompted them; for the assembly was exceedingly confused, and the greater part did not know for what they were come together, having only joined the crowd upon the alarm that had been given by the cry of the greatness of their goddess, without learning what had excited it.

And in the midst of this confusion they thrust forward Alexander from amongst the multitude, that he might speak unto the people, the Jews also urging him on, fearing lest they, who were known to be disaffected to all kinds of idolatry, should suffer in the tumult, without being distinguished from the followers of Paul: And Alexander was willing to comply with the design, and therefore beckoning with his hand for silence, would have made a defence to the people. But when they knew that he was a Jew, and consequently an enemy to their image worship, they would not suffer him to speak; but one voice arose from them all, and the whole multitude united as one man, crying out in a tumultuous way for about the space of two hours together, Great is Diana of the Ephesians.

But the Chancellord, who was a person not only

opinion, though I know that the theatres were places in which the Greeks often met for the dispatch of public business, when there were no shows exhibited. (See Raphel. ex. Xen. p. 177.) Some would render the word ἀναξιος primate of Asia, and I think very properly; (see Mr. Biscoe at Boyle's Lect. chap. viii. § 4. p. 302—305) and, as they were persons of great dignity, and some of the priests too, this civil message from them was at once a proof of their candour, and of the moderation with which Paul had behaved, which made them thus kindlv solicitous for his safety. Dr. Benson thinks, they recollected the danger to which Paul had been exposed in a combat with wild beasts in this very theatre, to which some have supposed the apostle refers, 1 Cor. xv. 32, a text which we may consider hereafter.

They thrust forward Alexander, &c.] Grutius thinks, this was Alexander the copper smith, once a professed Christian, but afterwards an apostate, and an enemy to Paul; (1 Tim. i. 20; 2 Tim. iv. 14;) and he supposes it an artifice of the Jews, who knew themselves obnoxious on account of their aversion to idolatry, to employ one of their body in declaring against Paul on this public occasion. But I question, whether the word ἀναξιος would have been used, had he chiefly intended an accusation against Paul; nor is it evident to me, that he had yet renounced Christianity, or incurred the sentence referred to above, if this were indeed the same person, and not some other Alexander.

The chancellor.] Our translators have rendered the word ἀναξιος, the townclerk. It literally signifies the scribe or secretary; but, as he seems to have been a person of some authority as well as learning, I thought the word chancellor, which Mr. Harrington also uses, (Works, p. 338,) was preferable; nor would recorder have been much amiss. Mr. Biscoe (at Boyle's Lect. chap. viii. § 4. p. 305,) endeavours

32 Some therefore cried one thing, and some another: for the assembly was confused, and the more part knew not wherefore they were come together.

33 And they drew Alexander out of the multitude, the Jews putting him forward. And Alexander beckoned with the hand, and would have made his defence unto the people.

34 But when they knew that he was a Jew, all with one voice about the space of two hours cried out, Great is Diana of the Ephesians.

35 And when the town-
town-clerk had appeased the people, he said, 
Ye men of Ephesus, 
what man is there that knoweth not how that the city of the Ephesians is a worshipper of the great goddess Diana, and of the image which fell down from Jupiter?

36 Seeing then that these things cannot be spoken against, ye ought to be quiet, and to do nothing rashly.

37 For ye have brought hither these men, which are neither robbers of churches, nor yet blasphemers of your goddess.

deavours to prove, on the testimony of Dominus and Apuleius, that the office referred, not to the city of Ephesus, but to the games, and that the person who bore it represented Apollo, one of the chief of their deities, and the supposed brother of Diana, which, if it were indeed the case, would give great weight to his interposition. He appears by this speech a person of a considerable prudence, and great abilities; for he urges in a few words,—that there was no need of such a public declaration, that they were votaries of Diana, since every body knew it, ver. 35, 36,—that the persons accused were not guilty of any breach of the laws, or public offence, ver. 37,—that, if they were, this was not a legal method of prosecuting them, ver. 38, 39,—and that they were themselves liable to prosecution for such a tumultuous proceeding, ver. 40.

a The city of the Ephesians is devoted, &c.] Though this was the best way of rendering the word ναομοβλητης, which on the whole occurred to me, yet I am sensible, how far it is (even with all I have added in the paraphrase,) from expressing the sense and spirit of the original. It properly signifies a priest, or priestess, devoted to some particular deity, whose business it is to look after the temple, and see that it be not only kept in good repair, but also neat and clean, and beautified in a proper manner; so that by the way, the word church-warden among us expresses but a part of the idea.—It appears by some ancient inscriptions on coins, and other authentic testimonies, (see Mr. Biscoe, p. 306, 307; and Raphel. ex Xem. p. 177, 178,) that there were some particular persons at Ephesus who had this office: but the chancellor, with great strength and beauty of language, to express the unanimity and zeal of the whole city in the service of Diana, speaks of it as one such attendant devotee in her temple; and as ναομοβλητης, is compounded of a word which signifies to sweep, it import the humility with which they were ready to stoop to the lowest office of service there. As for the tradition of this image’s falling down from Jupiter, there was the like legend concerning several other images among the Heathens, (as Mr. Biscoe has shewn by many learned quotations, p. 307, 308,) as there is likewise concerning some pictures of the virgin Mary in Popish churches.

b Neither robbers of temples, nor blasphemers of your goddess.] It is very ungenerous in Orobio (opud Limborch, Collat. cum Jud. p. 154,) to insinuate from hence, that the fear of suffering kept Paul from declaring against the established idolatrie here
He speaks they were to blame for this violent meeting.

one would imagine by these exclamations of yours that they were; but who, so far I can learn, behave themselves in a grave and orderly manner, and occasion no disturbance to the State by their private notions whatever they be. If therefore Demetrius, and the artificers that are with him have suffered in their property, and have a charge of any private injury to offer against anyone, the civil courts are held, in which they may have justice done them; or if they have any crime relating to the State to alledge against any, the law directs them how they should proceed, and there are the Roman proconsuls to whom they may apply, who are the proper judges of such cases. Let them then bring their action and impale one another and traverse their suit in a legal manner in either of these judicatories, till it is brought to a fair determination. But if the cause be not properly either civil or criminal, and you are inquiring any thing concerning other matters, relating to our common utility, or to religion, which may seem of a special nature, there is no room to

here; and it is much more so in Lord Shaftesbury, (Charact. Vol. III. p. 86.) to represent the apostle and his companions, as acquitting in this defence of the chancellor, and sheltering themselves under it, though it maintained, that they allowed the divinity of Diana and her image; not to insist on Breunus’s remark, that nothing said against gods made with hands could affect an image, which was supposed to have fallen down from heaven, nor to urge Paul’s defence, though that puts him quite out of the question as to any reply to the speech; it is obvious to answer, that the chancellor’s assertion is only this, “That the persons in question had not disturbed the public peace by any riotous attempt to plunder or demolish the temple or altar of Diana, nor did they abuse her by sacrilegious language.” This was much to their honour; but in how serious, strenuous, and courageous a manner the apostles bore an open, though always modest and peaceful, testimony against idolatry, the whole series of their history and writings shew, Orobio forgets, that the Jews were here silent; and both he, and the noble (but often inconsistent) writer of the Characteristic, forget, how irregular a step it would have been for any Jew or Christian to have detained an assembly, then so prudently dismissed, and how very ill-timed the best religious discourse would then have been, which indeed might have left the maker of it in a great measure chargeable with all the mischief which should have followed.

But if ye inquire any thing concerning other matters, it shall be

38 Wherefore if Demetrius and the craftsmen which are with him, have a matter against any man, the law is open, and there are deputies; let them impale one another.

39 But if ye inquire any thing concerning other matters, it shall be

and
Reflections on the people's rage, and the chancellor's prudence.

be determined in a lawful assembly.

40 For we are in danger to be called in question for this day's uproar, there being no cause whereby we may give an account of this concourse.

41 And when he had thus spoken, he dismissed the assembly.

to doubt but it shall be determined to the general satisfaction, in a lawful assembly of the Asiatic States, who will enquire into it impartially, and with all diligence proportionable to its importance. And to this it will be highly expedient to refer; for indeed we are all in danger of being called in question by our superiors for the insurrection which has happened this day, as there is no sufficient cause by which we can account for this tumultuous concourse, which therefore may justly give some alarm to the Roman magistrates.

And when he had said these things, he dismissed the assembly; and without any further violence they returned to their own habitations.

IMPROVEMENT.

May God grant that the zeal of the Heathens, in the worship of their imaginary deities, may not rise up in judgment against us for the neglect of the living Jehovah! They rent the skies with acclamations of the greatness of their goddess, and spared no cost to adorn her temple, or to purchase the models of it. May a sense of the greatness of our God, who dwelleth not in temples made with hands, fill our minds continually, and make us ready to spend and be spent in his service!

In too many instances, indeed, religion has degenerated into craft, and been made the pretence of promoting men's secular interest. Would to God that all artifices of this kind were to be found amongst Heathens! But the spirit of these votaries to Diana has too often invaded the Christian church, and perhaps raised not a few tumults against them who have been its best friends.—We see how mad and furious is the rage of an incensed populace: Let us bless God that we are not exposed to it, and be thankful for that kind Providence which preserved the precious life of the apostle when after the manner of men he fought with beasts at Ephesus. (1 Cor. xv. 32.)

The original words, τατινως and ευφραστώς, remarkably answer to those of that law.  
No cause by which we can account for this concourse.] Fire, inundations, the sudden invasion of enemies, &c. might have excused and justified a sudden concourse of people rushing together with some violence; but the chancellor with great propriety observes, there was no such cause, nor any other adequate one, to be assigned.

And indeed.] Raphelius has remarked, (Venet. ex Aen. in Act. iv. 27; &c.,) that μετα often signifies indeed, which seems to me an observation of moment.

In danger of being called in question for the insurrection, &c.] There was a Roman law, which made it capital to raise a riot: "In causam et concursum fercit, capitul puniatur;" and it has been observed, that
Paul goes to Macedonia, and visits Greece.

The prudence of this chancellor is worthy of esteem, who found out a way to quiet this uproar: Happy had it been for him, if the good sense he shewed upon this occasion had led him to see the vanity of that idle tradition, which taught them that an image fell down from their imaginary Jupiter, or that those could be gods who were made with hands. But the god of this world hath in all ages blinded the minds of multitudes, (2 Cor. iv. 4.) and they acted like idiots in religion, when in other instances their sagacity hath commanded a deserved and universal admiration. The prevalence of idolatry through so many polished and learned, as well as savage and ignorant nations, both ancient and modern, is a sad demonstration of this. Let us pray, that they may consider and shew themselves men, (Isa. xlvi. 8,) and deliver their own souls under a sensibility that they have a lie in their right hand. (Isa. xliv. 20.)

For this the labours of Paul were employed; and the progress of that gospel he preached appears matter of great joy, when the effects of it are considered in this view. May it, like the morning light, spread from one end of the heavens to the other; while the admired vanities of the Heathen are degraded, and cast (as the sacred oracles assure us they shall be) to the moles and the bats. (Isa. ii. 20.)

SECT. XLV.

Paul, having made a tour through the country of Macedonia, goes to Achaia; and returning back again through Macedonia, takes ship at Philippi, and so comes to Troas; where he held an assembly, in which the night was spent, and Eutychus, killed by a fall, was raised to life; after which Paul proceeds on his voyage. Acts XX. 1—16.

Acts XX. 1.

And after the uproar was ceased Paul called unto him the disciples, and embraced them, and departed

Acts XX. 1.

We have given an account of the insurrection at Ephesus, how it was excited by Demetrius and his workmen, and prudently quieted by the interposition of the chancellor. Now after the tumult was ceased, Paul calling the disciples to him, and embracing them with great affection, departed from Ephesus after the long abode he had made there: And having passed through Troas in his way, he crossed the sea from thence to go into Macedonia, to visit the

* Departed from Ephesus—to go into Macedonia.* It is very natural to conclude, (as Dr. Burson and many others do,) that Paul now left Timothy at Ephesus, and that he refers to it, 1 Tim. i. 3, he being by this time returned from that embassy mentioned Acts xix. 22.—As the apostle went through Troas, which lay in his way to Macedonia,
To avoid the Jews he returns to Macedonia.

ed for to go into Macedo- 
a, when he had gone over those parts, 
and when the Jews laid

and when he had gone over those parts, and had given them much exhortation, he came into Greece,

3 And there abode three months. And when the Jews laid wait for him, as he about to sail into Syria, he purposed to return the Philippians, Thessalonians, and Bereans, to whom (as was observed before) he had sent Timothy and Erastus, while he stayed in Asia, (chap. xix. 22.) and from whence Timothy was now returned, and left behind him at Ephesus.

And after Paul was come to Macedonia, as he was going through those parts, he zealously pursued the work in which he was engaged; and having exhorted the faithful he found there, and comforted them with much discourse, he came from thence into Greece, that he might visit the churches at Corinth, and in the neighbouring cities of Achaia. And when he had 3 continued [there] three months, he was now ready to set out from thence with what had been collected for the poor brethren in Judea: but as he understood that an ambush was laid for him by the Jews, when he was about to embark for Macedonia, he met with a fair opportunity of preaching the gospel there; (2 Cor. ii. 12.) but, not receiving those tidings of his friends at Corinth which he expected by Titus, he passed on to Macedonia without further delay, (fifth, ver. 13.) intending to proceed to Corinth from thence, since he could not visit that church first, as he had once intended; 2 Cor. i. 13, 15. Compare 1 Cor. xvi. 5, 6.

b Going through those parts.] In Macedonia, after great anxiety in his mind, he at length met with Titus, who brought him a comfortable account of the state of affairs at Corinth; (2 Cor. vii. 5—7.) and in particular, what he said of their liberal disposition gave the apostle reason to glory in them, and to excite the Macedonians to imitate their generosity, in assisting the contribution he was now raising for the poor Christians in Judea, which was one great part of his business in this journey. (2 Cor. ix. 2, viii. 1—14.) The Second Epistle to the Corinthians was therefore written from Macedonia at this time, (see the places last quoted,) and was sent by Titus, who on this occasion returned to get the collection in still greater forwardness.—This tour through Philippi, Amphipolis, Apollonia, Thessalonica, and Berea, would of course take up several months; and no doubt, many circumstances would occur at most of these places, which made Paul's presence with them for a while highly expedient.—It seems probable that Paul wrote his First Epistle to Timothy from hence, expecting to return to Ephesus again, and then designing that Timothy should continue there till he came, (1 Tim. iii. 14, 15. iv. 13.) though Providence ordered the matter otherwise. I shall hereafter, if God permit, mention the reasons which incline me at present to believe, that Paul wrote his First Epistle to Timothy now, rather than after he was set at liberty from his first imprisonment at Rome, to which time Dr. Pearson (Annal. Paul. ad. an. 64, p. 29,) and Mr. Le Clerc, Excl. Hist. cent. i. an. 65, § 2) refers it. The principal of them are well stated by Dr. Benson, (Hist. Vol. ii. p. 167—199,) than which I remember nothing more satisfactory on the subject. See also Mr. Boyse's Works, Vol. ii. p. 293, 294.

c Continued there three months.] It seems that Paul met with business here, and in other places, which detained him longer than he expected. From hence he probably wrote his celebrated Epistle to the Romans; for it plainly appears, that epistle was writ before his imprisonment at Rome, and in it he speaks of a collection made by the churches of Macedonia and Achaia, with which he was hastening to Jerusalem, (Romans xv. 25—27.) a circumstance, which fixes it to this time. It also appears from Romans xvi. 21, that Timothy and Sopater (or Sopater, one of the noble Bereans,) were with him when that epistle was wrote, which agrees with the fourth verse of this chapter, by which we find, they both attended him into Asia; and consequently, if the da e of the First Epistle to Timothy be as it is fixed above, Paul found some unexpected reason to send for that evangelist to come to him from Ephesus, to which place (as we find from what follows,) the apostle did not, according to his own intention, return.

d And
Syria, he upon this account thought it advisable to return by way of Macedonia, so that the churches there had an happy opportunity of receiving a third visit from him.

4 And Sopater the Berean not only attended him in his Macedonian journey till he took shipping, but crossed the sea with him, and accompanied him as far as what is called the proper Asia, and there went also with him some of the Thessalonians, namely, Aristarchus and Secundus; and also Gaius of Derbe, and Timothy, who was now come to him from Ephesus: And of the Asiatics, or natives of the prosconsular Asia, there were also in the number of those who joined their company, Tychicus and Trophimus. These two last mentioned having information of the time and place where they might expect us, going before to Asia, stayed for us a while at Troas, where we were to land.

6 And some days after they had left us, we set sail for Philippi, after the days of unleavened bread were ended, and crossing part of the Ægean sea, return through Macedonia.

4 And there accompanied him into Asia, Sopater of Berea; and of the Thessalonians, Aristarchus and Secundus; and Gaius of Derbe, and Timothy; and of Asia, Tychicus, and Trophimus.

5 These going before, tarried for us at Troas.

6 And we sailed away from Philippi, after the days of unleavened bread, and came
I. *He raises Eutychus, and celebrates the eucharist.*

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Came unto them at Troas in five days, where we continued seven days, conversing with the Christians there. 

8 And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow, and continued his speech until midnight.

9 And there sat in a upper chamber, where they were gathered together.

* Came to them at Troas in five days.] Paul in his former progress came from Troas to Philippi in two days; (Acts xvi. 11, 12,) but crossing the sea is very uncertain, and it was easy for the voyage to be lengthened by contrary winds, so that we need not explain it of the time that passed, before they joined the company that tarried for them. Paul did not set out from Philippi till after the Passover week; and, if his voyage was deferred, (as some have thought,) that no offence might be given by his travelling at a season which the Jews accounted so peculiarly holy, the same reason would induce those that went before him not to begin their voyage at that time; so that Paul seems to have tarried some days after them, before he set sail: nor is there any reason to suppose with Dr. Lightfoot, (Chron. in loc. ) that these five days were not spent in sailing down the river Strymon from Philippi, and crossing part of the Aegean Sea, but that Paul took a longer circuit, and went first to Corinth, before he came to them at Troas.

[Hence we continued seven days.] This Paul might choose to do so much the rather, as he had declined such great views of service, as were opened to him when he passed through it before in his way to Macedonia, (2 Cor. ii. 12, 13,)—Perhaps he might now lodge at the house of Carpus; but it seems to have been in a later journey, that he left there the books, and other things to which he refers, 2 Tim. iv. 13. It plainly appears from the manner in which Luke speaks here, and all along afterwards, that he attended him in all this journey and voyage, though, by his altering the expression, he does not seem to have been with him since he was at Philippi in his former progress; Acts xvi. 12, 13. (Compare note on Acts xvi. 13, p. 141.)

* When the disciples met together to break bread, that is, to celebrate the eucharist.] It is strange, that Mr. Barclay, in his Apology, p. 475, should argue from ver. 11. that this was only a common meal, and not the Lord's supper. It is well known, the primitive Christians administered the eucharist, every Lord's day; and, as that was the most solemn and appropriate, as well as the concluding act of their worship, it is no wonder that it should be mentioned as the end of their assembling; whereas, had nothing more than a common meal, been indeed, Luke would have hardly thought that worth mentioning, especially when Paul being with them on a Lord's day, they would so naturally have something far nobler and more important in view, in which accordingly we find them employed: and it is quite unreasonable to suppose, they spent their time in feasting, which neither the occasion nor the hour would well admit.—The argument which some over-zealous papists have drawn from this text, for denying the cup, in the sacrament to the lady, was so solemnly given up in the council of Trent, (Paulus Had. lib. iii. p. 486,) that it is astonishing, any who profess to believe the divine authority of that council, should ever have presumed to plead it again.

b Sitting
He proceeds on his voyage, and comes to Miletus.

the windows open to prevent the immediate heat of the room; and a certain young man, whose name was Eutychus, who was there sitting in an open window, fell into a profound sleep: and as Paul continued his discourse a long time, he was overcome with sleep, that he fell down from the third story to the ground, and was taken up dead. This threw the whole assembly into disorder; and Paul upon this breaking off his discourse, went down and fell upon him, and taking him in his arms, said, Do not make any disturbance, for I assure you that his life is in him, and God will quickly restore him to perfect health. And having thus composed and quieted their minds, Paul returned to his work, and going up again into the chamber where the assembly met, and having broken bread and eaten with the rest of the disciples, in commemoration of the death of Christ, when this solemnity was over, he conversed with them a considerable time longer, even till break of day; and so went out from that house, and departed from Troas, to meet the ship which was to take him aboard at Assos. And before the assembly broke up, they brought the youth into the room alive and well, and were not a little comforted at so happy an event: and the rather, as they might apprehend that some reproaches would have been occasioned by his death, if he had not been so recovered, because it happened in a Christian assembly, which had been protracted so long beyond the usual bounds of time on this extraordinary occasion.

Sitting in an open window.] The word ουρανος; plainly signifies an open window, which had a sort of wooden casement, or little door, which was set open, that the room might not be over-heated with so much company and so many lamps.—It is well known, the ancients had not yet glass in their windows, though the manner of making that elegant and useful commodity was invented long before.

His life is in him.] Some have imagined, that, as God immediately intended to raise this young man from the dead, the soul, still remained in the body, though not united to it. Cradock. Apost. Hist. Vol. II. p. 123. note.) But, if we conceive of the soul, as purely an immaterial substance, I must own myself at a loss to guess what such kind of expressions mean. It is well known, that ὑποτελειν often signifies life; and the words only import, that though he was dead before, the apostle now perceived some symptoms of his revival.

I only add, that ἐπαινεσα, he fell upon him, may signify that Paul threw himself on the body, as Elijah and Eliska did on those they intended to raise. (1 Kings xvii. 21. 2 Kings iv. 34.) and that συνέκοψεβοι may either signify his embracing him at the same time, or his lifting him up in his arms with the assistance of some that stood near.

Conversed till break of day.] A remarkable instance of zeal in Paul, when in a journey, and when he had been so long employed in public exercises; perhaps under an apprehension, like that which he expressed soon after to the elders of Ephesus, ver. 23, that he should never have an opportunity of seeing these his friends together any more.

But

Endeavoured
13 And we went before to ship, and sailed round the promontory to Assos, where we were to take up Paul; for so had he appointed, minding himself to go afoot from Troas thither, that he might thus enjoy a little more of the company of his christian brethren, of whom he was then to take a long leave. And as soon as he joined us at Assos, according to his own appointment, we took him up into the ship, and came to the celebrated port of Mitylene in the island of Lesbos. And sailing from thence we came the next day over against Chios, the island so famous for producing some of the finest Grecian wines; and the day following we touched at the island of Samos: and steering from thence towards the Asian shore, having stayed a while at Trogyllium we put into the mouth of the river Maeander, and came the day after to Miletus. For Paul under whose direction the vessel was, had determined to sail by Ephesus, because he would not spend the time in Asia; for he hasted, if it were possible for him, to be at Jerusalem the day of Pentecost.

14 And when he met with us at Assos, we took him in, and came to Mitylene.

15 And we sailed thence, and came the next day over against Chios; and the next day we arrived at Samos, and tarried at Trogyllium; and the next day we came to Miletus.

16 For Paul had determined to sail by Ephesus, because he would not spend the time in Asia; for he hasted, if it were possible for him, to be at Jerusalem the day of Pentecost.

But we that were to go with Paul went before into the ship, and sailed round the neighbouring promontory to Assos, where we were to take up Paul; for so had he appointed, choosing himself to go afoot from Troas thither, that he might thus enjoy a little more of the company of his christian brethren, of whom he was then to take a long leave. And as soon as he joined us at Assos, according to his own appointment, we took him up into the ship, and came to the celebrated port of Mitylene in the island of Lesbos. And sailing from thence we came the next day over against Chios, the island so famous for producing some of the finest Grecian wines; and the day following we touched at the island of Samos: and steering from thence towards the Asian shore, having stayed a while at Trogyllium we put into the mouth of the river Maeander, and came the day after to Miletus. For Paul under whose direction the vessel was, had determined to sail by Ephesus, because he would not spend the time in Asia; for he hasted, if it were possible for him, to be at Jerusalem the day of Pentecost.

Nevertheless, he sent for the ministers of Ephesus, and made a very remarkable discourse to them, of which we shall give a particular account in the next section.

**IMPROVEMENT.**

With what pleasure would Paul, and the christians of Mace-donia and Achaia, enjoy these happy interviews with each other! 1, 2 A blessed earnest no doubt it was, of that superior pleasure with which they shall meet in the day of the Lord, when (as he had testified

1 Endeavoured to be at Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost.) It is observed by Chrysostom, as was hinted on a former occasion of this kind, *mote* on Acts xviii. 21, p. 182,) this was, that he might have an opportunity of meeting a greater number of people from Judea and other parts, the days being then longer then at any other feast.—In consequence of this, some journeys might perhaps be saved, and many prejudices against his person and ministry obviated: and, which was particularly considerable, the readiest and best opportunity taken of distributing to those Jewish christians, that lived perhaps at some distance from Jerusalem, the alms with which he was charged. Yet, by a mysterious providence, this very circumstance of meeting so many strangers at the feast was the occasion of this improvement. See Acts xxi. 22, & seq.
testified to some of them) they shall appear as his joy and his crown, (1 Thess. ii. 19, 20.)

Ver. We may assure ourselves, that his converse with his friends at Troas was peculiarly delightful; and may reasonably hope, that though one of the auditory was overcome by the infirmity of nature, and cast into a deep sleep during so long a discourse as Paul made, yet that many others were all wakeful, and gave a joyful attention. Nor can the apostle be censured for imprudence, in protracting the divine exercise in such an extraordinary circumstance, beyond the limits which would commonly be convenient.

9—12 Eutychus was unhappily overtaken, and he had like to have paid dear for it: His death would no doubt, have been peculiarly grievous to his pious friends, not only as sudden and accidental, but as the sad effect of having slept under the word of God, under the preaching of an apostle. Yet even in that view of it, how much more inexcusable had he been, had it been in the broad light of the day, in a congregation where the service would hardly have filled up two hours? Where yet we sometimes see christian worshippers, (if they may be called worshippers) slumbering and sleeping; a sight, I believe, never to be seen in a Mahometan mosque, and seldom in a pagan temple. Had those near Eutychus, that had observed his slumber, out of a foolish complaisance forborne to awake him, they would have brought perhaps greater guilt upon their own souls than he upon his; and when his eyes and ears had been sealed in death, might perhaps have reflected upon themselves with a painful severity as having been accessory to his ruin. But the mercy of the Lord joined with and added efficacy to the compassion of Paul, his servant; in consequence of which the life of this youth, was restored, and he was delivered well to his friends: Whereas, many that have allowed themselves to trifle under sermons and set themselves to sleep, or who, as it were, have been dreaming awake, have perished for ever with the neglected sound of the gospel in their ears, have slept the sleep of eternal death, and are fallen to rise no more.

16 We see Paul solicitous to be present at Jerusalem at Pentecost, declining a visit to his Ephesian friends, amongst whom he had lately made so long an abode; thereby, no doubt, denying himself a most pleasing entertainment, out of regard to the views of superior usefulness: Thus must we learn to act; and if we would be of any importance in life, and pass our final account honourably and comfortably, must project schemes of usefulness, and resolutely adhere to them, though it obliges us to abstract or restrain ourselves from the converse of many in whose company we might find some of the most agreeable entertainments we are to expect on our way to heaven. Happy shall we be, if, at length,
meeting them at the end of our journey, we enjoy an everlasting pleasure in that converse, which fidelity to our common master has now oblige us to interrupt.

SECT. XLVI.

Paul's pathetic and important discourse to the elders of the Ephesian church, when he took his leave of them at Miletus. Acts 17, to the end.

Acts XX. 17.
AND from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the church.

18 And when they were come to him, he said unto them, Ye know, from the first day that I came into Asia, after what manner I have been with you at all seasons.

19 Serving the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears,

20 Called thither the elders of the church.] It is so plain, that these elders are in the 28th verse called bishops, that the most candid writers of our own establishment allow the distinction between bishops and presbyters not to have been so early a date. (Compare Paul i. 1 Tit. i. 5, 7; 1 Pet. v. 1, 2, which are equally strong to the same purpose.) Dr. Hammond would indeed evade the argument by saying, that he called together all the presbyters of all the neighbouring parts of Asia. But it is certain, the congregations of Asia, Galatia, Macedonia, &c. are spoken of in Paul's writings as distinct churches; and it is difficult to conceive, how such a number of churches could have been called together on so short a warning, without supposing them less numerous in point of residence, than one would have suspected such primitive ministers should have been; nor can we imagine, that Paul would have countenanced so gross an irregularity, and so dangerous a precedent, had he found it out among them.

Acts XX. 17.

IT was observed in the preceding section, that Paul's concern to be at Jerusalem by Pentecost prevented his going to Ephesus to visit his Christian friends there; but as he was not far from thence, and was desirous to see them, he took this opportunity of sending a message to Ephesus from the neighbouring city of Miletus, while the ship in which he was embarked lay at anchor there; and called thither the elders of the Ephesian church.

And when they were come to him, he made a very affectionate discourse, and said to them, You well know, my dear brethren, how I have been conversant among you, and in what manner I have behaved, all the time which has elapsed from the first day in which I entered into Asia; Not only instructing others in the principles of divine truth, but in the whole tenor of my conduct serving the Lord Jesus Christ myself, with
with all humility and lowliness of mind, and with many tears of tender affection, and in the midst of many trials which befell me, especially by means of the ambushes which the malice of the Jews was continually laying for me; by which they endeavoured as much as possible to destroy both my person and my reputation, and to frustrate all the success of my labours. Nevertheless you know that nothing discouraged me from endeavouring to discharge my duty, and can witness for me how I have suppressed nothing that was advantageous, or which could be of any service to your edification; not neglecting to preach to you, and to teach you publicly in worshipping assemblies, and, as God gave me opportunity, from house to house; inculcating in visits, and in private meetings, the same doctrines which I declared in the synagogues, and other places of concourse and resort;

Testifying and urging with the greatest earnestness and affection, both to the Jews and Greeks, the great importance and absolute necessity of repentance towards God, and of a cordial and living faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, in order to their eternal salvation.

And now, behold I am going bound, as it were, in the Spirit, under the strong impulse of the Spirit of God upon my mind, which intimates my duty to me in such a manner, that I can neither omit nor delay it; and am firmly resolved to proceed to Jerusalem; not particularly knowing what I shall suffer in that city, or what the things may be that shall befall me in it, when I come thither: Excepting that the Holy Spirit testifies, in almost every city through which I pass, saying, by the mouth of the divinely inspired prophets, whom I find among the Christians there, that bonds and afflictions await me.

But I make no account of any of these things, nor do I esteem my very life precious to myself on such an occasion; so that I may but faithfully

...
life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.

25 And now behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more.

26 Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men.

27 For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God.

28 Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and fully and joyfully finish my course as a Christian and an apostle, and fulfil the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, [even] to testify the truth, and urge the importance, of the glorious gospel of the free and abundant grace of God, to which I am myself so highly obliged, beyond all expression, and beyond all the returns that I can ever make, by any labour or suffering I may undergo for his service.

And now behold, I know that ye all, my dear 25 brethren, among whom I have so long conversed, preaching the kingdom of God, shall not see my face any more; for if I should ever return to these parts of the world again, it is particularly intimated to me, that I shall no more come to Ephesus. Wherefore I sent for you, that I may take my solemn leave of you, and I testify to you all this day, that if any of you, or of the people under your care, perish, I at least am clear from the blood of all men. For God is my witness, that I have sincerely laboured for the salvation of all that heard me, and have not declined to declare to you with the utmost freedom and integrity all the council of God: but on the contrary have laid before you the whole system of divine truths relating to our redemption by Christ, and the way to eternal happiness with him, in the most plain and faithful manner, whatever censure, contempt, or opposition, I might incur by such a declaration.

Therefore, my brethren as you desire to live and die with comfort, and to give up your final account

cern only one or two, should have occasioned such a general lamentation as is expressed, ver. 38, and therefore I conclude, that the apostle had received some particular revelation, that if he should ever return to these parts of Asia again, (as from Philem. ver. 22, I think it probable he might,) yet that he should not have an opportunity of calling at Ephesus, or of seeing the ministers to whom he now addressed.

Not declined to declare to you with the utmost freedom and integrity.] My learned and ingenuous friend, the reverend Mr. Breckell (in his Christian Warfare, p. 32, Not.) has proved by some very apposite quotations from Demosthenes and Lucian, that the proper import of the word πρόποσις, in such a connection, is to disguise any important truth, or at least to decline the open publication of it, for fear of displeasing those to whom it ought to be declared.

h Take
account well in that day which I have so often mentioned to you, I solemnly charge you that you take heed to yourselves, and to the whole flock \(h\) ever which the Holy Spirit has constituted and appointed you inspectors or bishops: See then that you act worthy of that important charge, and be careful diligently to feed the church of God, which he hath redeemed with his own precious blood, 

\(^h\) Take heed—to the whole flock.] A proper concern for the safety and prosperity of the flock would no doubt lead them to guard against the admission of such persons into the ministry, as were like to hurt the church, and to do that they could towards forming others to that important office, and admitting them into it with due solemnity. But, as the Ephesian church was for the present supplied with ministers, it was not so immediate a care as their preaching, and therefore did not require such express mention.

\(1\) Over which the Holy Spirit has constituted you bishops.] As it was by the operation of the Holy Spirit that they were qualified for this high office of the Christian ministry, so there was reason to believe, that the apostles and elders, who might concern in setting them apart to it, and the several members of the Ephesian church, who chose them to such a relation to that society, were under the guidance and direction of that sacred agent: and the expression shews, as good Mr. Baxter well observes, \(Works,\ Vol. II. p. 284\,\) how absurd it is, for any to reject the ministry in general, under a pretence that they have the Holy Ghost to teach them.

\(k\) The church of God, which he hath redeemed with his own blood.] How very little reason there is to follow the few copies, which read \(Ke pes\) instead of \(\Theta h\), the reverend Messrs. Enry and Lavington have so fully shewn, in their dispute with Mr. Joseph Hallet on this text, that I think this passage must be allowed as an incontrovertible proof, that the blood of Christ is here called the blood of God, as being the blood of that man, who is also God with \(\Theta h\) God manifested in the flesh; and I cannot but apprehend that it was by the special direction of the Holy Spirit, that so remarkable an expression was used. —Raphaelius his shewn, that \(\Theta h\) often signifies to preserve from destruction. \(Not in \text{Herald, p. 583.}\)

\(29\) For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock.
enter in among you, who with unwarrantable and pernicious views, having no mercy on the flock, will fall upon it with a voracious eagerness and overbearing violence, and make a terrible havoc, out of a mean and wicked regard to their own private and secular interest: Yeas, which is yet more lamentable, even from among yourselves proud and factious men shall arise, speaking perverse things, contrary to sound doctrine, in order to draw away disciples from the purity and simplicity of the Christian faith, as I delivered it to you, that they may follow after them, till they are destroyed with them. Watch therefore with all diligence and care, remembering that for the space of three years, during which I abode at Ephesus, or in the neighbouring parts, I ceased not to warn every one to whom I had access, by night and by day, with tears in mine eyes, which manifested the tenderness and sincerity of my concern for their happiness. Let it then be your care, that a church planted by me with so much labour and solicitude of soul, may not be ravaged and overthrown by the enemy, but that it may long continue to flourish.

And now, brethren, as the providence of God is calling me away, and appointing me other scenes of labour and suffering, I most heartily and affectionately recommend you to God, and to the word of his grace, to his gospel and blessing, to his presence and spirit; [even] to him that is able to edify and build you up in your holy faith, and

meneus and Alexander; (compare 2 Tim. i. 13; ii. 17, 18, with 1 Tim. i. 20, as also those that afterwards introduced the Nicolaitan principles and practices, of which Christ complains as prevailing here, (Rev. ii. 6,) as well as in the neighbouring city of Pergamus. (Ibid. ver. 14, 15.) So that the argument which some have urged from hence, to prove that the First Epistle to Timothy was writ after this meeting, is quite inconclusive.

Mr. L'Enfant and some other critics conclude, that these years are to be reckoned from his first arrival at Ephesus, chap. xviii. 19. But it is so plain, that he made no stay then, and that it was a considerable time before he returned thither, (compare chap. xix. 1,) that it seems to me much more probable, that though, after his preaching three months in the synagogue he taught only two years in the school of Tyrannus (chap. xix. 5—10,) he spent three years in or about this city. (Compare note c on Acts xix. 8, p. 158, and note c on Acts xix. 10, ibid.)

20 By night and by day.] This may probably intimate, that sometimes they had their night-meetings, either about the time of the tumult to avoid offence, or because many of the Christians, being poor, were obliged, as Paul himself was, to spend a considerable part of the day in secular labours. Compare ver. 24.

21 Even to him that is able, &c.] Though the gospel may be said to be able to edify men, as the scriptures are undoubtedly said to be able to make them wise unto salvation, (2 Tim. iii. 15,) yet it seems something harsh to say, that doctrines or writings can give us an inheritance. Some have explained τινος, the word, as signifying Christ, to whom it is evident these operations may be ascribed; (compare Mat. xvi. 18; Col. iii. 24; 2 Tim. iv. 8,) but as I do not remember that Christ is ever called the
He commends them to God, and the word of his grace,

and to give you at length an inheritance of eternal life and glory, among all that are sanctified by divine grace, and so prepared for it.

XX. 33. As for me, it is a great pleasure to reflect upon it, that I have a testimony in my own conscience, and in yours, that I have not directed my ministry to any mercenary views of pleasing any, how distinguished soever their circumstances might be, nor sought by any methods to enrich myself among you: I have coveted no man's silver, or gold, or costly raiment, but have contented myself with a plain and laborious life: Yea, yourselves know, that far from having any secular or worldly designs in preaching the gospel, these hands, which I am now stretching out among you, have ministered by their labour to my own necessities, and even have assisted to support those that were with me. (Compare 1 Cor. iv. 12; 1 Thess. ii. 9; 2 Thess. iii. 8, 9.) In which, as well as in other respects, I have set you an example, and by the conduct I have observed among you, as well as by the doctrine that I taught you, have showed you all things that relate to your duty, how that thus labouring as I have done, you ought to assist the needy and infirm who are not able to maintain themselves; and should be careful to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that he himself, while he conversed with his disciples, said, "It is much happier to give than to receive." See to it therefore, in that ministerial character which you bear, that you, above all others, be an example to the flock, of a generous and compassionate temper; and instead of making yourselves burthensome, be as helpful to them as you possibly can, both in their temporal and spiritual interest.

the word of God's grace, I rather suppose, that τὸ τελευταῖον refers to this, since God was evidently the last person mentioned before, and as it is certain that, whatever the word does, God does by it, this must be acknowledged to be the sense, whether the construction be, or be not, admitted. Compare Rom. xvi. 25, 27; and Jude, ver. 24, 25.

v To assist the infirm.] The word ἀναθηματικός has exactly this signification, and, as Raphelius shews at large, (Not. ad Herod. p. 384, & seq.) may express either sickness or poverty, as the Hebrew word הָעִבֵּרָה also does. (See my Sermon on compassion the sick, p. 6, 7.) It must here signify, to be sure, such poor people, as are disabled some way or another from maintaining themselves by their own labour. Compare Eph. iv. 28.

4 Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, &c.] This is a true and precious monument of Apostolical tradition, which, by being written in these authentic memoirs, is happily preserved, Dr. Tillotson, (Vol. III. p. 387.) Monsieur Ablancourt (Apoph. Anc. p. 3.) Grotius, and some other other writers, have quoted passages from Plutarch, Seneca, and others of the ancients, bearing some resemblance to it.

That
Reflections on Paul's discourse to the elders of Ephesus.

And having said these things, he kneeled down and prayed with them all in the most fervent and affectionate manner, and with the tenderest expressions of the most cordial friendship took his leave of them. And there was a great lamentation on this occasion among all those that were present; and falling upon Paul's neck, they embraced and kissed him with great affection, and with many tears; Especially grieving for that melancholy word which he spake, and which immediately had struck their very hearts, when he told them, that they should see his face no more in those parts, where they had so long enjoyed the benefit of his ministry, inspection, and converse. And thus they conducted him to the ship, commending his person to the protection, and his labours to the blessing of his great master.

Improvement.

Though these elders of Ephesus were to see the face of the Ver apostle no more, which was indeed just matter of lamentation, yet we would hope this excellent discourse of his continued in their minds, and was as a nail fastened in a sure place. May all Christians, and especially all Ministers, that read it, retain a lively remembrance of it.

May we learn of this great apostle, to serve the Lord with humility and affection: May those who are called to preside in assemblies, and to take the charge of souls, with-hold from their people nothing that is profitable for them; and not contenting themselves with public instructions, may they also teach from house to house, shewing the same temper in private converse which they express while ministering in the assemblies; and testifying, as matter of universal and perpetual importance, repentance toward God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ: And, O that the divine blessing may attend these remonstrances, that many may every where repent and believe?

May all ministers learn the exalted sentiments and language of this truly Christian hero; and each of them be able to say, under the earnestly contends, Op. Posth. Diss. I cap. ix. § 3,) be written after this, and so late as the year 65; and consequently it appears to overthrow all that he or others have built on that supposition, and greatly to confirm the argument suggested above in note e.
the greatest difficulties and discouragements, in the view of bonds
and afflictions, and even of martyrdom itself; None of these things
move me, neither count I my life dear unto me, so that I may finish
my course with joy, and may fulfill the ministry which I have re-
ceived of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.

Such resolutions may they form when they enter on their office,
and may they act upon them in discharging every part of it: taking
heed to themselves, and to the respective flocks over which the
Holy Ghost hath made them overseers: Accordingly may they
take the oversight thereof not by constraint but willingly: not for
filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; (1 Pet. v. 2;) coveting no man's
silver or gold, or raiment; nor affecting to enrich or aggrandize
themselves or their families, but always ready to relieve the nece-
sisous according to their ability, remembering this precious word
of the Lord Jesus, so happily preserved, especially in this con-
nection, that it is more blessed to give than to receive. Thus while
they are not shunning to declare in the course of their public
ministry the whole counsel of God, may they also be examples to the
flock of an uniform, steady, and resolute piety! And to quicken
them to it, may they often reflect, that the church of God com-
titted to their trust was redeemed by his own blood: May it be impressed
deply on all our hearts, that we are entrusted with the care of
those precious souls for whom our divine Redeemer bled and died!
May we therefore see to it, that we are watchful to preserve them
from every danger; that we warn them day and night with tears;
and, in a word, that we order our whole behaviour so, that when we
must take our final leave of them, we may be able to testify as in the
sight of God, that we are clear from the blood of all men.

Such ministers may God raise up to his church in every future
age; such may his grace make all that are already employed in
the work, and for this purpose let every one who wishes well to
the common cause of Christ and of souls join in recommending
us to God, and to the word of his grace, whence we are to draw
our instructions and our supports. This will be a means, under
the divine blessing, to keep us from falling, in the midst of all
dangers and temptations; till at length he give us an inheritance
with all the saints among whom we have laboured, that they who
sow, and reap, may rejoice together. Amen.
SECT. XLVII.

The apostle proceeds in his voyage from Miletus to Caesarea, and resolutely pursues his journey to Jerusalem, notwithstanding repeated warnings from inspired persons of the danger he must encounter there. Acts XXI. 1—16.

Acts XXI. 1.

And it came to pass, that after we were gotten from them, and had launched, we came with a straight course unto Coos, and the day following unto Rhodes, and from thence unto Patara.

And finding a ship sailing over unto Phenicia, we went aboard, and set forth.

Now when we had discovered Cyprus, we left it on the left hand, and sailed into Syria, and landed at Tyre: for there the ship was to unload her freight.

And finding disciples we tarried there seven days: who said to Paul through the Spirit, that he should not go up to Jerusalem.

And when we had accomplished those days,

Acts XXI. 1.

IT was with difficulty Paul and his company had parted from the elders of the church of Ephesus; but after the instructions he had given them, he was determined to pursue his voyage; and as soon as we had withdrawn ourselves from them, and had set sail from Miletus, we came with a direct course to the island of Coos; and the next day to that of Rhodes, and from thence to the Port of Patara, a city which lay on the continent, in the territory of Lycia. And finding there a ship that was passing over to Phenicia, quitting the vessel which had brought us hither, we went aboard this other, and set sail. And coming within sight of Cyprus we pursued our voyage without touching there; and leaving it on the left hand, we sailed by the southern coast of that island to Syria, and landed at the celebrated city of Tyre, the principal port of Phenicia for there the ship was to unload its freight. And we continued there at Tyre seven days, finding a number of persons in that city who were disciples of our common Lord; among whom there were some who told Paul by the inspiration of the Spirit, if he tendered his own liberty and safety, not to go up to Jerusalem, since it would certainly expose him to great hazard, and very threatening dangers would await him there.

But when we had finished these seven days, we departed from thence, and went our way with a full resolution of embarking again to proceed to Jerusalem, notwithstanding all these admonitions; as Paul deliberately judged, that all the sufferings he might meet with in the course of his ministry would tend to the furtherance of the gospel, and that it was his duty to fulfil his engagements.

* If he tendered his own liberty and safety, not to go up, &c.] It is necessary to take it with this limitation; for, had the Spirit forbidden his journey to Jerusalem, we may be sure he would have desisted from it.}

b Tolerans.]
engagements to the churches, in delivering their aims to the brethren there, whatever might happen: And though he did not yield to the persuasion of his friends at Tyre, yet they omitted no imaginable token of respect, but all attended us out of the city, with [their] wives and children; and kneeling down on the sea shore where we were to part, we once more prayed together, and so took our leave. And having affectionately embraced each other, we that were going to Jerusalem with Paul went on board the ship to proceed on our voyage, and they that dwelt at Tyre returned back to their own houses.

7 And finishing our course by sea, we came from Tyre to the port of Ptolemais, which lay to the south of the former city, on the same coast of the Mediterranean sea; and embracing the brethren there, we continued with them no more than one day.

8 And on the morrow, Paul and his company, departed from Ptolemais, and travelling by land came to the city of Cesarea; which had been rendered remarkable in the church by the residence of Cornelius the devout centurion, and was celebrated over the whole country, not only for the elegance and splendour of its buildings, but likewise as the place where the Roman governor generally resided and kept his court. And entering there into the house of Philip the evangelist, who was [one] of the seven deacons mentioned in the former part of this history, (chap. vi. 3.) and who had settled at Cesarea, after he had baptized the eunuch, (chap. viii. 40,) we lodged with him during our stay in this city. Now he had four virgin daughters, who were all prophetesses, as the miraculous gifts of

other noble ancient cities, only a heap of ruins. See Mr. Mannert's Journey to Jerusalem, p. 55.

b Ptolemais.] This was a celebrated city on the sea coast, which fell by lot to the tribe of Asher, who did not drive out the inhabitants. Its ancient name was Archo. (Judg. i 31.) It was enlarged and beautified by the first of the Egyptian Ptolemies, from whence it took its new appellation. It was the scene of many celebrated actions in that series of mad expeditions, which was called the holy war. The Turks, who are now masters of all this region, call it Acre, or Arca; and, notwithstanding all the advantages of its situation, on one of the finest bays on that coast, and in the neighbourhood of mount of Carmel, it is now, like many

days, we departed, and went our way, and they all brought us on our way, with wives and children, till we were out of the city: and we kneeled down on the shore, and prayed.

6 And when we had taken our leave one of another, we took ship; and they returned home again.

7 And when we had finished our course from Tyre, we came to Ptolemais, and saluted the brethren, and abode with them one day.

8 And the next day we that were of Paul's company, departed, and came unto Cesarea; and we entered into the house of Philip the evangelist, (which was one of the seven,) and abode with him.

9 And the same man had four daughters, virgins,
the Spirit were sometimes communicated to women as well as to men. (Compare Acts ii. 17, 18.) And as we continued [there] many days, a certain prophet whose name was Agabus, who had been acquainted with us some years before at Antioch, where he foretold the famine which had since happened in the days of Claudius Caesar, (chap. xi. 28,) came down from Judea to Cæsarea. And coming to us, when we had several of our friends together, he uttered a prediction which greatly affected us all, attending it, as usual, with a significant and prophetic sign; for he took up Paul’s girdle, and binding his own hands and feet, he said, Thus saith the Holy Spirit, by whose inspiration I now speak and act, So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man whose girdle this is, and shall deliver him a prisoner into the hands of the Gentiles.

And when we who were present heard these things, solicitous for the life and safety of so dear a friend, and so eminent a servant of Christ in the gospel, both we his companions who came to Cæsarea with him, and also the inhabitants of that place; intreated him with tears, in the most pressing and endearing terms, that he would not go up to Jerusalem, since it appeared that he would be exposed to such imminent dangers in consequence of that journey.

But Paul, sensibly touched with the concern which we expressed on his account, and yet resolutely bent upon following what he apprehended to be the evident call of duty, whatever sufferings it might expose him to, answered at once with the greatest tenderness and firmness of spirit, What mean ye, my dear friends, by weeping thus, and even breaking my heart by these fond solicitations? Cease your tears, and your importunity, in an affair where conscience pleads on the opposite side; for I can assure you, as I told my brethren of Ephesus in my last interview with them, (chap. xx. 24,) that I am ready with the greatest cheerfulness, not only to be bound and cast into prison, but also to die at Jerusalem, or wherever else I may be called to it, for the honourable and beloved name of the Lord Jesus, and shall esteem it a most glorious and happy period of life, to pour out my blood in defence of that blessed gospel which he hath committed to my charge.
Reflections on Paul’s readiness to suffer for Christ.

And when we plainly perceived, that he would not be persuaded by any importunity we could use, we ceased to press him any farther, saying, Let the will of the Lord be done! May he protect his faithful servant, whithersoever he leads him, and over-rule his confinement and affliction to the advantage of that glorious cause, on which it seems on the first appearance to wear so threatening an aspect.

And after these days had been spent at Cæsarea, Paul would not lose the opportunity of being present at the approaching festival, and therefore making up our baggage we went up to Jerusalem as expeditiously as we could. And [some] of the disciples also from Cæsarea went along with us, and brought [us] to the house of one Mnason a Cyprian, an old disciple, with whom we should lodge; which were the more willing to do, as he was a person of established character and reputation in the church.

IMPROVEMENT.

Let us observe and emulate that excellent and heroic temper which appeared in the blessed apostle St. Paul, in this journey to Jerusalem: When still the Holy Spirit testified in every city, that bonds and afflictions awaited him; when his friends in so fond a manner hung around him, and endeavoured to divert him from his purpose; he was not insensible to their tender regards: Far from that, his heart melted, and was even ready to break, under the impression; yet still he continued inflexible: There was a sacred passion warmer in his soul than the love of friends, or liberty, or life; the love of Christ constrained him, (2 Cor. v. 14.) and made him willing, joyfully willing, not only to be bound, but to die at Jerusalem, for his name, who had indeed died for him there. O that such as this might be the temper, such as these the sentiments, of every minister, of every Christian! For surely imprisonment in such a case is better than liberty; and death infinitely preferable to the most prosperous life secured by deserting his service, or flying from any post which the great Captain of our salvation hath assigned us.

Brought us to one Mnason a Cyprian, an old disciple.] Mnason was a native of Cyprus, but an inhabitant of Jerusalem, who probably had been converted either by Christ, or the apostle, at the first opening of the gospel there.—I have followed Sir Norton Knatchbull’s version of the words, as that which appeared to me best to suit the original; for it seems very unnatural to render κύπριον Μνασών, bringing Mnason with them.
Paul is kindly received by James and the brethren.

On the other hand, let us learn of these wise and pious friends of Paul, to acquiesce in the will of God, when the determination of it is apparent, how contrary soever it may be to our natural desires, or even to those views which we had formed for the advancement of his cause and interest in the world; where perfect resignation may be difficult, in proportion to the degree of our piety and zeal. Can any teach him knowledge, (Job xxii. 22.) or pursue the purposes of his glory by wiser and surer methods than those which he has chosen? In this instance the bonds of Paul, which these good men dreaded as so fatal an obstruction to the gospel, tended, as he himself saw and witnessed while he was yet under them, to the furtherance of it; (Phil. i. 12.) and what they apprehended would prevent their seeing him any more, occasioned his returning to Caesarea, and continuing there for a long time, when, though he was a prisoner, they had free liberty of conversing with him, (Acts xxiii. 33; xxiv. 23, 27.) And even to this day we see the efficacy of his sufferings, in the spirit they have added to those epistles which he wrote while a prisoner of Jesus Christ, and in that weight which such a circumstance also adds to his testimony. Let Jesus therefore lead us, and all his other servants, whithersoever he pleases, and we will bless his most mysterious conduct, in sure expectation of that day, when what is now most astonishing in it, shall appear beautiful, and ordered for the best.

It is pleasant to observe the honour paid to Mnason, as an old disciple: An honourable title indeed it is; and wherever it is found, may days speak, and the multitude of years teach wisdom! (Job xxxii. 7.) And may there be a readiness, as in this good old man, to employ all the remaining vigour of nature, be it more or less, in the service of Christ, and in the offices of cordial love and generous friendship to those who are engaged in the work of the Lord.

SECT. XLVIII.

Paul being arrived at Jerusalem, after an interview with James and the elders of the church there, is assaulted by the Jews while worshipping in the temple, and rescued by Lysias the Roman officers from the extremest danger of being torn in pieces by their fury. Acts XXI. 17—36.
received us with great pleasure and affection. And the next day Paul took us with him, who had attended him in his journey, and entered in with us to the house of James the apostle, commonly called James the Less, or the Lord’s brother; and all the elders of the flourishing church in that city were present there, to receive so important a visitant, of whose arrival and errand they had heard. And Paul, having embraced them with great affection, presented us that were of his company to them; and after this he gave them a particular account of all those things which God had done among the Gentiles by his ministry since he last left Jerusalem, informing them of the success that he had met with in Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea, Athens, Corinth, and Ephesus; of the churches he had planted in all those places, and of the opportunity he had enjoyed of visiting most of them a second time; as well as of taking a review of those in Cilicia, Pamphylia, Lystra, and other parts of Asia, with the plantation of which they had formerly been made acquainted. (Acts xv. 4.) And he concluded with an account of those aims which he had brought from the Gentile converts, for the relief of their brethren of the circumcision at Jerusalem.

And when they heard [it] they glorified the Lord Jesus Christ, for this wonderful demonstration of his presence and grace with his servant; and then they said to him, Dear and honoured brother, we rejoice from our hearts in the triumphs of the gospel among the Gentiles; and as we doubt not but the whole body of the Christian church is dear to thee, as well as to us, we assure ourselves thou wilt candidly join in all prudent endeavours for removing any prejudices which may have been weakly imbibed, to the injury of that mutual affection which we so earnestly desire to cultivate: In a word, thou seest with thine own eyes, how many myriads of believing Jews there are, who are gathered

* The brethren received us with great pleasure and affection.] The aims he brought with him would be one, though far from being the only or the chief circumstance of endeavour; so that the prayers of his Christian friends were answered, that his ministry with respect to Jerusalem (n. 15; 1 Thess. v. 5) might be acceptable to the saints, Rom. xvi. 31.

b How many myriads of believing Jews there are. I do not apprehend, that it can be certainly argued from hence, that there were more than thirty, or even twenty thousand Jewish believers now present at Jerusalem; for the word µυριαδες may only in general denote a great number; but it is certain, that the greater part of them were not stated inhabitants of Jerusalem, but only visited
They advise him to join with some that were under a vow.

21 And they are informed of thee, that thou teachest all the Jews which are among the Gentiles, to forsake Moses, saying, that they ought not to circumcise their children, neither to walk after the customs.

22 What is it therefore? the multitude must needs come together; for they will hear that thou art come.

23 Do therefore this that we say to thee; we have four men which have a vow on them;

visited it on occasion of this great festival; (compare ver. 27;) so that no certain argument can be deduced from hence, as to the plurality of congregations supposed to have been now under the care of the bishop of Jerusalem, if there were indeed any Christian officer who had that title so early, which it does not appear from scripture that there was. It is surprising therefore, that the ingenious Mr. Slater should lay so much stress upon this text in his Original Draught of the primitive Churches.

* Thou teachest all the Jews which are among the Gentile nations to apostatize from Moses. * It is a leading observation of that vain and unhappy man Mr. Toland, in his Nazarenus, which he grounds principally on this text and history, that the gospel never designed to set the Jews at liberty from the law of Moses, except with regard to sacrifices, though he allows, that the Gentiles were not intended to be subject to it. (See Nazaren. p. 35, 36.) But it is evident, that he fell into that erroneous opinion, (so directly contrary to many other scriptures, such as, for instance, Rom. xiv. 14; Eph. ii. 14, 15; Col. ii. 14—17; 1 Tim. iv. 4; 2 Cor. iii. 9—11; Heb. viii. 13;) by not attending to a most obvious medium between enforcing it on their consciences as necessary and condemning it as unprofitable. I have strongly expressed this medium in the paraphrase on ver. 23 and 25.

Be
let us counsel thee to take this method, as the best expedient we can think of, for immediately taking off any ill impressions which might otherwise be apprehended. There are with us four men, who are converts to the gospel, and have at present a vow of Nazariteship upon them: Now we would advise thee to take them as thy companions and partners, and purify thyself with them, according to the Jewish ritual; and be at all the necessary charges with them, that they may shave their heads, and offer the sacrifices which the law has appointed in that case: And then all that come up to the temple, and see thee in these circumstances, will know by their own observation, that there is nothing of truth and reality in those things which they have heard of thee; but that instead of forbidding these observances to others, thou thyself walkest regularly, keeping the law, and avoiding all occasion of offence. And as for the believing Gentiles, thou knowest we have written some time ago to them, determining that they should think themselves obliged to observe none of these things; except it be to keep themselves from that which is offered to idols, and from blood, and from that which is strangled, and from fornication. (Chap xv. 28, 29.) And as we all concurred in this decree, they cannot imagine what thou mayest now do, according to the advice we give thee,

\* Be at charges with them, that they may show their heads. Josephus not only tells us in general, that it was customary with persons in any sickness or distress, to make vows, and to spend at least thirty days in extraordinary devotions, (Bell. Jud. lib. ii. cap. 15, § 1,) but also says, that, when Agrippa came to Jerusalem, he offered sacrifices of thanksgivings and ordered a good number of Nazarites to be shaved; (Antiq. lib. six. cap. 6, [al. 5,] § 1,) a phrase exactly answering to this; from whence Dr. Larinier (Credib. Book 1. chap. 9, § 7, Vol. 1. p. 473, 474,) very naturally argues, that to be at charges with Nazarites, was both a common and very popular thing among the Jews. The learned Witsius also has long since produced a most appropriate passage from Maimonedes, in which he expressly asserts, that a person, who was not himself a Nazarine, might bind himself by a vow to take part with one in his sacrifice. (Wits. Methemat. cap. x. § 3, p. 149. The charges of these four Nazarites would be the price of eight lambs and four rams, besides oil, flour, &c. Numb. vi. 14, 15.

24 Them take and purify thyself with them, and be at charges with them, that they may shave their heads; and all may know, that those things whereof they were informed concerning thee, are nothing, but that thou thyself also walkest orderly, and keepest the law.

25 As touching the Gentiles which believe we have written and concluded, that they observe no such thing, save only that they keep themselves from things offered to idols, and from blood, and from strangled, and from fornication.
The page contains a paragraph discussing the actions of Paul and James concerning the observance of religious ceremonies. The text mentions the purification of the temple, the seven days of purification, and the celebration of Pentecost. It also refers to the unanimous advice of James and the brethren, Paul's mature deliberation, and the necessity of the salvation of the Jews. The paragraph concludes with a statement about the success of Paul's mission and the necessity of salvation for the Jews.

The text is from a religious context, specifically regarding the early Christian church and its relationship with Judaism. The paragraph discusses the importance of obedience to religious laws and ceremonies, and the role of leaders in guiding these practices.

The text is a significant source for understanding the early Christian perspective on Jewish customs and the relationship between the Jewish and Christian communities.
must surely excite; for this is the wretched and detestable man, that every where teaches all men a set of principles most directly contrary to the people of the Jews, and the divine law we have received by Moses; and to this sacred and venerable place, which hath been erected for the service of God at so vast an expense, and so solemnly devoted to him: And on these malignant principles he hath even brought Greeks into the temple, within that inclosure which no foreigner may enter, and thereby hath polluted this holy place; and so has justly forfeited his life to its injured honours. For they had before seen Trophimus the Ephesian, who had attended him in his late journey, 'chap. xx. 4.) in the city with him, whom they rashly imagined that Paul had brought with him into that part of the temple which was appropriated to native Jews, or to such as were proselyted by circumcision to the entire observation of their law.

And the whole city was moved on this occasion, and there was presently a tumultuous concourse of the people; and laying hold on Paul in a furious manner, they dragged him out of the temple, that it might not be defiled with his blood: And immediately the gates were shut by order of the proper officer, to prevent any farther riot or violation of those sacred inclosures, as well as to exclude Paul from seeking any sanctuary at the horns of the altar.

And when the multitude, who had now got him in their cruel hands, were so outrageous that they went about to kill him, word was brought to all men every where against the people, and the law, and this place; and farther, brought Greeks also into the temple, and hath polluted this holy place.

(For they had been before with him, in the city, Trophimus an Ephesian, whom they supposed that Paul had brought into the temple.)

And all the city was moved, and the people ran together; and they took Paul, and drew him out of the temple: and forthwith the doors were shut.

And as they went about to kill him tidings came unto the chief
He is rescued by the Tribune.

chifl. captain of the band, that all Jerusalem was in an uproar:

32 Who immediately took soldiers and centurions, and ran down on them: and when they saw the chief captain and the soldiers, they left beating of Paul.

33 Then the chief captain came near, and took him, and commanded him to be bound with two chains; and demanded who he was, and what he had done.

34 And some cried one to Lysias, the chief officer of the Roman garrison, who was the tribune of the cohort, and was called by the Greek title of Chiliarch, from his having (as that word signifies) a thousand men with their proper centurions under his command; and as a detachment of his men kept guard in the outward portico of the temple during the public festival, to prevent any tumult, he was soon informed by those upon duty that all the city of Jerusalem was in confusion. This presenta-ently alarmed the tribune, who knowing how much it was his concern to check such turbulent proceedings, immediately took soldiers and some of the centurions belonging to the cohort with him, and ran in among them to suppress the riot: The Jews were therefore stopped before they could accomplish their design, and when they saw the tribune and the soldiers come among them, they ceased from beating Paul; which they had begun to do in such a manner, that had he not been thus seasonably rescued in this critical moment, his life must soon have fallen a sacrifice to their rage. Then the tribune drew near and took him into his custody; and supposing him to be some very criminal and obnoxious person, in order to prevent his escape, he commanded him to be bound with two chains: And as he sounded the people so enraged against him, he inquired of those that were the foremost among them, who he was, that such a general outcry had been raised against him, and what he had done to deserve it?

And such was the confusion of this riotous assembly (allowing its authority) could not have affected him, since he himself was a Jew. Yet what the Jews called the judgment of zeal would no doubt have been pleaded to justify the murder, had it been perpetrated according to their wicked intent.

9 Kept guard in the outer portico of the temple, &c.] Josephus assures us, (Bell. Jud. lib. v. cap. 9, [al. vi 6], § 8,) that a detachment of the armed soldiers, belonging to the Roman legio which lodged in the adjacent castle of Antonia, kept guard in the portico of the temple, which surrounded the court of the Gentiles on feast-days to prevent disorders; and he has another passage to the same purpose, Antig. lib. xx. cap. 5, [al. 4.] § 3.—It is evident, that Lysias was not present, when this tumult began. I think it probable, as Dr. Lardner conjectures, (Credib. Book i. chap. 2. § 14, Vol. I. p. 221, 222,) that he was the oldest Roman tribune at Jerusalem, and was the commanding officer at the castle above-mentioned, and of the legion quartered there.

10 They ceased from beating Paul.] It is said just before, they went about to kill him, which they intended to have done, as Dr. Lightfoot has observed, by what the Jews were used to call the beating of the rebels, in which they did not stay for any legal process, but, having found that any had profaned the temple, the people rushed immediately upon them, and, having dragged them out, beat them with stones and stones in such a cruel manner, that they often died under their heads. (See Dr. Lightf. Chron. in loc. and Service of the Temple, chap. i. § 3.) And thus they would have treated Paul upon a mere pretence, had they not been prevented by the coming of the tribune.
assembly, that some of the multitude cried out one thing, and some another: And as the tribune saw it was in vain to think the matter should be cleared at present, and that he could not know the certainty of any thing by reason of the tumult, he commanded him to be carried into the castle of Antonia, where the Roman garrison was kept. But when he was upon the stairs which led up from the nearest gate of the temple to it, it came to pass that he was borne up from the ground by the soldiers who had him in charge, because of the violence of the crowd.

For the multitude of the people pressed after and followed him as far as they could; and when he was out of their reach, pursued him still with clamourous invectives, eagerly crying out, Away with him, away with him; for he deserves the worst of punishments, and should immediately be put to death.

**IMPROVEMENT.**

It is delightful to observe, how the same principles of humble and benevolent piety wrought in the mind of Paul on the one hand, on the other in those of James and the brethren of the circumcision; while the one recounted, and the other rejoiced in what God had done by his ministry among the Gentiles. May ministers always remember, that whatever good is done by their ministry, it is the work of God, and that the praise is to be rendered to him: And, O! that whenever they assemble and meet with each other for religious and friendly conference, they may have cause for mutual thankfulness while they hear and tell what efficacy God is putting into the word, as spoken by them; which is never like to be greater that when the ministers of it appear least in their own eyes.

20 A prudent precaution, consistent with the strictest integrity, discovered itself in the advice which James and the Jewish Christians gave to their beloved brother Paul on this occasion, to conform to the customs of the Mosaic worship, in an affair in which he very innocently might do it; thereby to shew, that as he was not a slave to ceremonial institutions, so neither was he a bigotted zealot against them; nor one that made it a point of humour to oppose them in

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*When he was upon the stairs.*] These stairs are particularly mentioned in the passage from Josephus, which is referred to in the beginning of note "p"; and it appears by the account he gives, that the castle was situated at an angle of the temple, and had a number of stairs descending both to the western and the northern portico.
in matters of indifference, and to father that opposition on conscience. When will the leaders of our churches agree to teach their followers by such wise and mild examples, to study the honour, and comfort, and usefulness, of each other, pursuing the things that make for peace, and tend to promote mutual edification? (Rom. xiv. 19.)

Yet what prudence, or what integrity, may not sometimes be mistaken or misrepresented? What good may not be evil spoken of, and abused as a cloak for mischief, when men's hearts are overflowing with malice, and are so wretchedly corrupted as to take pleasure in indulging it under the disguise of religion? What numerous falsehoods attended the charge which those furious Jews brought against Paul, in every article of it? Yet it is believed, on the credit of a noisy rabble; and it was owing to the gracious interposition of a very remarkable Providence, that this light of Israel was not immediately quenched; and that this holy apostle was not torn in pieces by an outrageous mob, fierce and irrational as so many wild beasts, before he could have any liberty to speak for himself.

Let not religion be condemned unheard, and then surely it cannot be condemned at all: Let us with pleasure reflect, that God can raise up guardians to it from the most unexpected quarter, and animate men, like this Roman officer, from considerations merely secular, to appear most seasonably and effectually in the defence of his faithful servants. Let us adore the wise conduct of Providence in instances like these; and let us always pursue our duty with courage, since God can never be at a loss for expedients to secure us in our adherence to it.

SECT. XLIX.

Paul makes a speech to the people at Jerusalem, in which he gives them a particular account of the means by which he was engaged to embrace and preach the gospel. Acts XXI. 37, to the end, XXII. 1—16.

Acts XXI. 37.

AND as Paul was to be led into the castle, he said unto the chief captain, May I speak unto thee? who said, Canst thou speak Greek?

Acts XXI. 37.

Thas been shewn how Paul was rescued from the tumult of the Jews, who would have killed him; and with what violence they followed him with their cries, when he was taken from them: But as Paul was going to be brought into the castle, to which the Roman soldiers were conducting him, he said to the tribune who commanded them, May I be allowed to speak a few words to thee? And when the tribune heard him speak
He obtains leave of the tribune to speak to the people.

He, in the Greek language, said in some surprise, What, canst thou speak Greek? Art not thou that Egyptian who didst some time before these days stir up a sedition, and lead out into the wilderness four thousand murderers, who committed horrible depredations thereon all on whom were so unhappy as to come within their reach? The public is so exasperated against thee, that it naturally occurred to my mind thou mightest be that most desperate of criminals. But Paul said to him, Thou art entirely mistaken, both as to my person and character, as I hope fully to convince thee; for I am no Egyptian, but am indeed a Jew of Tarsus in Cilicia, and therefore a citizen of no inconsiderable city; and I intreat thee thou wouldst favour me so far, as to permit me to speak to the people, who by this unreasonable attack upon me, shew how little they know of me; and for their sakes as well as my own, I could wish them to be better informed. And on his giving permission to say what he pleased, Paul, standing on the stairs that led up to the castle, beckoned with his hand to the people; and when he found there was a great silence, and they were ready to attend to what

38 Art not thou that Egyptian, which before these days madest an uproar, and leddest out into the wilderness four thousand men that were murderers?

39 But Paul said, I am a man which am a Jew of Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, a citizen of no mean city: and I beseech thee, suffer me to speak unto the people.

40 And when he had given him leave, Paul stood on the stairs, and beckoned with the hand unto the people: and when there was made a great silence, he

* Art not thou that Egyptian, &c.] Josephus (as almost all the learned commentators on this verse have observed,) expressly mentions this Egyptian impostor, as coming into Judea while Felix was governor there, where he had been some years before this tumult. (Compare Acts xxvii. 10.) By his account of him, it appears, that, calling himself a prophet, he took many of the common people with him from Jerusalem, and having brought them into the wilderness, and increased the number of his followers to thirty thousand, he led them to mount Oribi, promising them, that at his command the walls of Jerusalem should fall down, that they might enter the city; but the Jews, instead of joining with them, stood on their defence; and, Felix marching out against him with the Roman soldiers, he was deserted by his followers, and fled with a few of his chief adherents, most of which were either taken or slain, but the Egyptian himself made his escape. (See Joseph. Bell. Jud. lib. ii. cap. 13, [al. 12.] § 5; & Antiq. lib. xx. cap. 8, [al. 6.] § 6.) There is indeed a considerable difference between the sacred historian and Josephus, as to the numbers mentioned by each; for the conciliating of which I refer my reader to the learned Mr. Ward's solution of this difficulty, as reported by Dr. Lardner; (Credib. Book ii. chap. 8, Vol. ii. p. 497, c seq.) and conclude this note with the just remark of Dr. Lardner, as to the great accuracy with which Luke has represented Lysias speaking of this matter. This man, when led into the wilderness, the impostor's name was unknown, he being only called an Egyptian; he had escaped alive; and most of his followers had deserted him; so that a tumult of the Jews about him would have been no unnatural circumstance, (as some have objected) since he had long ceased to be their idol.

* A citizen of no inconsiderable city.] The inhabitants of Tarsus, which seems to have taken its name from Tarshish the son of Javan, (Gen. x. 4,) boasted extremely of their antiquity, as Dio Chrysostom observes, Orat. 35. ad. Tarsenses; and Strabo tells us, Geograph. lib. xiv. p. 463,) that they were so considerable on account of learning, as well as commerce, wealth, and grandeur, that they might dispute the prize with Athens and Alexandria.—Paul, by saying he was a Jew of Tarsus, proved that he had a right to be in the temple.
Paul tells the Jews how zealous he had been for the law.

Acts XXII. 1. Men, brethren, and fathers, hear ye my defence, which I make now unto you.

2 (And when they heard that he spake in the Hebrew tongue to them, they kept the more silence; and he said,)

3 I am verily a man which am a Jew, born in Tarsus a city in Cilicia, yet brought up in this city, at the feet of Gamaliel, and taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers, and was zealous towards God, as ye all are this day.

4 And I persecuted this way unto the death, binding and delivering;

what he said, he addressed them in the Syriac tongue, which was then the common language of the Jews, and therefore called the Hebrew dialect; and made a discourse to them to the following purpose, saying,

Men, brethren, and fathers, of whatsoever age, rank, or circumstance of life, I beseech you, that you would compose yourselves patiently and candidly to hear my apology, [which I make] now to you for myself and my conduct; and I cannot but hope it will fully convince you, how much you have been misinformed concerning me. (And when they heard that he spake in their vulgar tongue, and spake what was then called the Hebrew dialect, they were the rather disposed to hearken to him, and, numerous as the assembly was, kept a strict silence; and he went on with his discourse, and said), It is well known to multitudes, that I am indeed by birth and religion a Jew, who was born at Tarsus; the chief city in the neighbouring province of Cilicia; but my parents were so warmly attached to their religion, and so desirous that I might be well instructed in it, that they sent me, at a great expense, to be educated here in this city, at the feet of that celebrated teacher Gamaliel, by whom I was trained up, and accurately instructed in the law of our fathers; being from my very youth exceedingly zealous for the honour of God and his sacred institutions, as you all are this day; Nor was there any in those days more violent in his opposition to the religion of Jesus than I was, who persecuted the followers of this Christian way and manner of worship, even to the very

Born at Tarsus.] This, as the learned Witsius well observes, Melchior. cap. i. § 3, shows how little credit is to be given to the tradition mentioned by Jerome, (de Script. Eccl. cap. v.) that Paul was born at Gischala in Judea, and driven from thence to Tarsus, when that city was sacked by the Romans, since it is directly contrary to this testimony of his own; and I mention it chiefly to show, how soon tradition erred in facts of any considerable standing; nor do I remember any proof of such a devastation at Gischala about the time of Paul’s birth, which was somewhat later than that of our Lord. (Compare Acts vii. 58.) I honour the testimony of the fathers exceedingly, when they speak on their personal knowledge: but, when they report facts said to have happened long before they were born, I dare not lay much stress upon them.

At the feet of Gamaliel.] Strabo tells us, in the passage referred to above, that it was customary among the inhabitants of Tarsus for the young people, when they had gone through a course of education at home, to travel abroad for further improvement.—Of this celebrated Gamaliel, to whom the care of Paul in his younger years was committed, see note t on Acts v. 34, Vol. I. p. 559.—The phrase of being brought up at his feet plainly alludes to the posture in which the scholars were usually placed, who sat on the ground, or on low seats while their teacher was raised on a kind of throne. Compare Luke x. 39.
And how eager in persecuting the followers of Christ.

very death; binding both men and women who

Acted XXII. 5

who professes it, without any regard to sex, age, or

quality, and delivering them all into prisons,

where they were closely and severely confined: As also the high-priest is my witness, and all the
court of the elders; for he and all the other
members of the Sanhedrim well know, how
eager I was to give them all the assistance in my
power towards rooting out the gospel, if possi-
ble, from the whole face of the earth: From
whom also having several years since received
letters to the brethren, empowering me to act
against those for whom I have now so great an
affection, I went to Damascus with a most re-
solutive purpose, according to the tenor of my
commission, to bring those that were there,
where I imagined many might have sought a
retreat, bound to Jerusalem; that they might
take their trial there, and be punished according
to the utmost rigour of the law. (Compare
Acts ix, 1, 2.)

6 And if you desire, as you probably may, to

know how I came so entirely to change my sen-
timents and measures, as to engage in the de-
fence and service of a cause which I so earnestly
had laboured to destroy, I will give you a plain
and faithful account of the wonderful event
which occasioned it. Be pleased therefore to
observe, that it came to pass on that most me-
morabla day of my whole life, that as I was
on my journey, and was now come nigh to Da-
mascus, where I had as it were my prey in view,
about noon, on a sudden, a great light shone about
me from heaven: And I fell to the ground in
unutterable astonishment, and at that instant
heard a voice from heaven, saying to me, Saul,
Saul, why dost thou persecute me? But I an-
swered trembling, Who art thou, Lord? and how
is

5 As also the high-
priest doth bear me
witness, and all the
estate of the elders:
from whom also I re-
cieved letters unto
the brethren, and went
to Damascus, to bring
them which were there,
bound unto Jerusalem,
for to be punished.

6 And it came to
pass, that as I made
my journey, and was
come nigh unto Da-
mascus about noon,
suddenly there shone
from heaven a great
light round about me.

7 And I fell unto
the ground, and heard
a voice saying unto me,
Saul, Saul, why per-
secutest thou me?

8 And I answered,
Who

6 Persecuted this way to the death.] We
know he was concerned in the death of
Stephen; (chap. viii. 1,) and, if he was
not so in that of many more, it was not
for want of zeal and rage, but merely of
power. But there is no reason to think,
that this sacred history contains a full ac-
count of all the outrages committed against
Christians, during the period to which it
extends.

7 Into prisons.] Witsius observes here,
that there were two sorts of prisons among
the Jews; one only for confinement, the
other where they were placed in most un-
easy postures, and put to a kind of tor-
ture; for the illustration of which, he
introduces some curious passages from the
rabbles. See Wits. Mel. tem. cap. 1. § 18.

8 The high-priest is my witness.] That is,
I can appeal to him for the proof of this.
It will not follow from hence, that he, who
was now high-priest, also bore that office
when Paul persecuted the Christians; he
might then perhaps be only an inferior
member of the Sanhedrim, on which sup-
position this appeal would be proper, and
consequently no light can be gained from
hence to fix the date of Paul's conversion.

9 Did
He gives them an account of his miraculous conversion.

Who art thou, Lord? And he said unto me, I am Jesus of Nazareth whom thou persecutest.

And they that were with me, saw indeed the light, and were amazed; but they heard not the voice of him that spake unto me. And I said, What shall I do, Lord? And the Lord said unto me, Arise, and go into Damascus, and there it shall be told thee of all things which are appointed for thee to do.

11 And when I could not see for the glory of that light, being led by the hand of them that were with me, I came into Damascus.

12 And one Ananias, a devout man, according to the law, having had a good report among the Jews which dwelt there,

13 Came unto me, and stood, and said unto me, Brother Saul, receive thy sight. And the is it that I have persecuted thee? And he said unto me, I am Jesus the Nazarene, whom thou persecutest by the furious rage with which thou art pursuing my disciples, and art endeavouring to destroy my gospel. And they that were with me saw the light indeed, and were terrified: but they heard only a confused sound, and did not distinctly hear the voice of him that spake to me. And I, finding no farther disposition to oppose that glorious person, who had condescended to appear in so glorious a manner to stop my wretched career, and to expostulate thus mildly with me, when it was evident he could have destroyed me in a moment, immediately surrendered as it were at discretion, and said, Lord, what shall I do? And the Lord said unto me, Arise and go into Damascus, and there it shall be told thee, and a particular account shall be given thee of all things which are appointed for thee to do: and thou shalt be informed what extraordinary services are allotted to thee, after all thou hast done against my cause and interest. And as, when I was risen from the ground, I could not see by reason of the glory of that light which had broke in upon me, with so bright a luster as quite to dazzle and blind my eyes, being led by the hand of those that were with me, I came to Damascus.

And one Ananias, a pious man according to the law, whose acceptance of the gospel had by no means destroyed his regard to the Mosaic institutions, and who on that account had a honourable character among all the Jews who dwelt at Damascus was sent to visit me: And coming to me by a divine appointment, and standing by me as I lay blind upon my bed, he said to me, Brother Saul, look up, and fix thine eyes
Reflections on Paul's account of his conversion.

And in that very hour and moment I found my sight restored; so that I looked up upon him, and saw him distinctly.

And he then addressed me in words which I shall never forget, and which have since been remarkably illustrated; for he said, My dear brother, the God of our fathers hath fore-ordained thee to know his will, as now manifested in his gospel, and to see that righteous person whom our nation so ungratefully rejected and crucified; and hath even granted thee the singular favour to hear a voice from his own mouth; though he be now ascended to the regions of celestial glory: And this because he intends to qualify thee for the most honourable and important service in his church; for thou shalt be his authentic witness to all men to whom thou mayest come, of those wonderful things which thou hast seen and heard on this extraordinary occasion. And now, considering this, why dost thou delay in the most solemn manner to declare thy joyful acceptance of these benefits? Arise immediately, and be baptized, and thereby take the method which Christ has appointed to wash away thy sins; declaring thy desire of renouncing them, and invoking the name of the Lord Jesus, who has so mercifully interposed to deliver thee from them, and made that ordinance a token of remission.

Improvement.

Ver. By whatever methods God hath been pleased to bring us home to himself, and to introduce into our minds the saving light of his gospel, we shall have long, and indeed everlasting reason, to recollect it with pleasure; especially when he hath gone in any remarkable way to do our souls good.

1 To see that righteous person, and to hear a voice from his mouth. I see no reason at all to refer this (as Lord Barrington and Dr. Benson do,) to a future vision of Christ and a future commission to be received from him. It plainly appears from Paul's own narration, that he had already seen him, and heard him speak. It is therefore most evidently naturally to refer it to the past rather than to a future event, though I own it may include both.

2 He baptized, and wash away thy sins. Baptism in the adult, excepting in the very peculiar instance of our Lord, was a token of confession and humiliation for sin, (on which account it is called the baptism of repentance, Mat. iii. 11. Mark i. 4. Luke iii. 3. Acts xiii. 24. xix. 4., and of a desire to be cleansed from it, as the body was by water cleansed from its pollution; and being administered to such professed penitents, by divine appointment, as a token of favourable regard to them, it was a seal of pardon. Nor did God ordinarily give any particular person any public and visible token of pardon, till he submitted to baptism; and this may explain, in what sense baptism might be said to wash away sins, and elsewhere to save. (Compare 1 Pet. iii. 21.) See Acts ii. 38. and the note there, Vol. II. p. 521.
remarkable manner out of his common way for this glorious purpose: They who have in this respect obtained mercy of the Lord, should undoubtedly make it their care often to recollect the particular circumstances, and should be ready on every proper occasion to recount those wonders of power and love, for the encouragement and instruction of others. (Compare 1 Tim. i. 16.)

The learned education which Paul had received at the feet of Gamaliel, was once no doubt the matter of his boasting and confidence. Unsanctified learning made his bonds strong, and furnished him with many a specious argument to oppose the gospel: Yet when divine grace changed his heart, and turned these accomplishments into another channel, they made the conquest so much the more glorious, and rendered him the fitter instrument to subserve God's wise and merciful purposes, for the defence and propagation of Christianity by his means. Wherever learning is possessed, may it be so directed and improved; and wherever it is perverted and abused, may Christ manifest his victorious power, to cast down imaginations, and every high thing which exalteth itself, in rebellion against him, till every thought he brought into a willing and thankful subjection to his authority. (2 Cor. x. 5.)

Adored be the condescension of that blessed Redeemer, which spared this prostrate enemy, and reduced him by the tender ex postulations of mercy, rather than the terrors of wrath; exerting that secret transforming power upon his heart, without which this miracle astonishing as it was, would have had no thorough and abiding effect. Speak, O Lord, from heaven to them that ignorantly persecute thee; and make them humbly willing to receive the law from thy mouth. Job xxii. 22.

If they who saw this tremendous scene, and the astonishing consequences of it, were not themselves subdued to the gospel, as it doth not appear that they were, it must certainly be a sad illustration of the hardness of the human heart, almost beyond parallel; especially when we consider how eager Paul would undoubtedly be, to make those who had been the associates of his crime the partners of his faith, service, and hope, as a Christian. But however these efforts might miscarry with respect to them, there were those who glorified God in him, (Gal. i. 24.) Let us take this renewed opportunity of doing it, and as he is still by his writings a glorious witness to Christ among us, on whom the ends of the world are come, let us, by receiving his testimony with a most cheerful assent, set to our seal that God is true, John iii. 33.
Paul tells the Jews of his trance at Jerusalem.

SECT. L.

Paul, proceeding in his defence to the Jews at Jerusalem, is interrupted in his remarkable story by their violence; and when about to be scourged by order of the Tribune, is exempted from it on pleading his privilege as a Roman citizen. Acts XXII. 17—29.

Acts XXII. 17. And it came to pass, that when I was come again to Jerusalem, even while I prayed in the temple, I was in a trance;

18 And saw him saying unto me, Make haste, and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem: for they will not receive thy testimony concerning me.

19 And I said, Lord, they are unwilling to yield to their instances which perhaps his desire and hope of usefulness at Jerusalem might otherwise have opposed. But, when he had been forced in that manner to flee for his life, while the memory of his zeal against Christianity was comparatively fresh in their memory, it does not seem natural to suppose he would have pleaded the probability of their regarding it after an interval of six years more, which according to the chronology of these ingenious writers, must have been the case.

* When I was returned to Jerusalem.] Lord Barrington (Miscell. Sacra, Abstract, p. 19, and Essay iii. p. 11, & seq.) and Dr. Benson, (Vol. II. p. 6, & seq.) suppose this memorable circumstance (which they make Paul's mission to the idolatrous Gentiles,) to have happened in the second journey, he made to Jerusalem, A. D. 44 (which is mentioned by Luke in Acts xi. 30. xii. 25.) and maintain, it was the same extacy, with that referred to, 2 Cor. xii. 2, as having happened fourteen years before the date of that epistle. I rather think the expression intimates, that it was on his first return to Jerusalem that he had this vision in the temple; and what he pleads here, (ver. 19, 20.) as to the probability of their receiving his testimony, suits that circumstance of time much better than the other. His dispute with some Hellenist Jews, who toward the close of his first visit to Jerusalem attempted to kill him, (chap. ix. 29) engaged the brethren also to hasten his departure; and our Lord's orders to him at this critical season might determine him to yield to their instances which perhaps his desire and hope of usefulness at Jerusalem might otherwise have opposed. But, when he had been forced in that manner to flee for his life, while the memory of his zeal against Christianity was comparatively fresh in their memory, it does not seem natural to suppose he would have pleaded the probability of their regarding it after an interval of six years more, which according to the chronology of these ingenious writers, must have been the case.

b * I was in a kind of trance or extacy.] See note x. on chap. x. 10, p. 55. Perhaps he might continue standing all the while with an intension of countenance, which, if it were observed by any near him, might be imputed to the fixedness of his devotion, or, if he fell down, it might be looked upon as an epileptic fit. All that he saw and heard was to be sure only a miraculous impression on his own nerves, not to be perceived by any other persons.

c Scourging
He was ordered away, to go and preach to the Gentiles.

unwilling to give them up as desperate, that I presumed to expostulate with Christ himself on this occasion, and said, Lord, I cannot but hope that my addresses to them will be attended with success; for as Jerusalem has been witness to the zeal with which I once opposed thy gospel, they to whom I would speak cannot but know, that with the utmost eagerness and cruelty I was but a little while ago imprisoning and scourging in the synagogues all them that believed in thee, whenever I could get them into mine hands: And that when the blood of Stephen, thy faithful and courageous martyr was unjustly and barbarously shed, almost on this very spot of ground, I also was standing by, and consenting to his slaughter, and was so officious on the occasion, that I even kept the garments of those that slew him: (Chap. vii. 58.) I may expect therefore, that a testimony from me will be heard with some peculiar regard, when they see that the evidences of thy gospel were strong enough to conquer such inveterate prejudices, and such furious rage against it.

But the Lord over-ruled my plea by a renewal of his charge, and he said to me, Reason no farther on this subject, but go thy way immediately, according to my directions: for, behold I will send thee far off to the Gentiles, and thou shalt preach the gospel, and publish the glad tidings of salvation with much greater encouragement and success among them.

And they heard him with quietness and attention to this word, and [then] were so enraged, as soon as he began to speak of a mission to the Gentiles, and this too in such light, as if the Jews were in a manner given up and rejected, that they were no longer able to bear it; but lifted up their voice in a most outrageous cry, saying, Away with this blasphemous fellow from the earth, for it is not fit that he should live any longer.

c Scourging in the synagogues.] It is strange, that Beza (on Mat. x. 17,) should think this so incredible, as to suspect the reading is corrupted, when the same phrase occurs again, Mat. xxiii. 34, as well as in the passage before us; nor is there any need we should suppose, that synagogues must signify not places of religious but civil assemblies, when, besides what Vitringa has alluded in confirmation of the use of such a practice from the Jewish writers, Synag. Vei. lib. iii. Part I. cap. 11.) Epiphanius directly mentions a fact of this kind, (contra Herens. tom. ii. lib. 1, p. 135,) and it appears, from what Eusebius had cited from a writer against the Montanists, to have been no uncommon case. (Eccles. Hist. lib. v. cap. 16, p. 92.) The custom has since been confirmed and illustrated in the celebrated instance of Aecosta. (Limborch. Collet. cum. Jud. p. 349, 550.) Comp. note * on Mat. x. 17, Vol. I. p. 394.

20 And when the blood of thy martyr Stephen was shed, I also was standing by, and consenting unto his death, and kept the rainement of them that slew him.

21 And he said unto me, Depart, for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles.

22 And they him audience unto this word, and then lift up their voices, and said, Away with such a fellow from the earth: for it is not fit that he should live.

Vp. lib. iii. Part I. cap. 11.) Epiphanius directly mentions a fact of this kind, (contra Herens. tom. ii. lib. 1, p. 135,) and it appears, from what Eusebius had cited from a writer against the Montanists, to have been no uncommon case. (Eccles. Hist. lib. v. cap. 16, p. 92.) The custom has since been confirmed and illustrated in the celebrated instance of Aecosta. (Limborch. Collet. cum. Jud. p. 349, 550.) Comp. note * on Mat. x. 17, Vol. I. p. 394.
The Tribune orders him to be examined by scourging.

sect. 1.

1. And as they were crying out in this furious manner, and were rending their garments in token of indignation and horror at this pretended blasphemy, and casting dust into the air, that it might fall down on their heads, and so they might appear more completely in the habit of mourners for the dishonour done to God and his people; The Tribune, not knowing the particulars of what had passed; but perceiving by the effect, that Paul had exasperated rather than appeased them by the apology he had been permitted to make, commanded that he should be brought into the castle; and as no witnesses regularly appeared to give information against him, he ordered that he should be put to the question by scourging him in the severest manner; that so he might know from his own confession, since he could learn it no other way, for what cause they raised such an outcry against him.

2. And as they were binding him with thongs for this purpose, Paul said to the centurion who stood by to command the guard upon this occasion, Is it indeed lawful for you to scourge a man who is a Roman citizen, and this too while he is uncondemned? Consider before you do this how you will answer for the violation of my privilege of which at a proper time you must expect hereafter to hear. And the centurion hearing [this] presently went and told the Tribune, saying, Consider what you are about to do, or you may be entangled in a difficulty of which you seem not to be aware; for this man says, he is a Roman, and consequently protected by the privileges of a free citizen from such usage as

23 And as they cried out, and cast off their clothes, and threw dust into the air.

24 The chief captain commanded him to be brought into the castle, and bade that he should be examined by scourging; that he might know wherefore they cried so against him.

25 And as they bound him with thongs, Paul said unto the centurion that stood by, Is it lawful for you to scourge a man who is a Roman citizen, and this too while he is uncondemned? Consider before you do this how you will answer for the violation of my privilege of which at a proper time you must expect hereafter to hear. And the centurion hearing [this] presently went and told the Tribune, saying, Consider what you are about to do, or you may be entangled in a difficulty of which you seem not to be aware; for this man says, he is a Roman, and consequently protected by the privileges of a free citizen from such usage as

26 When the centurion heard that, he went and told the chief captain, saying, Take heed what thou doest; for this man is a Roman.

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1 Be put to the question by scourging.]

2 To scourge a man who is a Roman.]

That the Romans used this method is proved by several learned writers, particularly by Dr. Lardner, Cred. Book I. chap. x. § 1, 2, Vol. I. p. 496-498, and Mr. Biscoe, chap. ix. § 8, p. 535, 536.
in preparing for him. *And upon this the Tribune, who was alarmed at this report, came and said to him, Tell me truly, as knowing how un-safe it will be to trifle with me by offering a plea of this nature, if it cannot be supported: art thou indeed a Roman citizen, as I am told thou hast asserted? And he said, Yes, I most assuredly am; and I am capable of producing proper evidence of it, if it be insisted upon, in due time and place. *And the Tribune answered, I am surprized to hear this considering the appearance thou now makest; for I, who (as thou seest) am a person of high rank in the army, obtained this freedom with a considerable sum of money, which I can hardly suppose thou shouldst have been able to pay, unless there has been some extraordinary change in thy circumstances. And Paul replied, but I was under no necessity of making any purchase at all of this kind, for I was free-born, my father having been intitled to that honour and privilege before me. They therefore who were about to have put him to the question, immediately departed from him: And the Tribune was glad to compound the matter so; for he was much afraid when he knew that he was indeed a Roman, and was greatly concerned because he had bound him, in order to his being scourged; which was a breach of privilege, for which he might have been accused by Paul to his superiors. He contented himself therefore with confining him a little while, till he could bring him before the Jewish council; fearing lest if he had dismissed him immediately the Jews would be incensed against him, and he might thus have been in danger of something much worse from Paul’s enraged and tumultuous enemies.

*I was free-born.* I cannot think with Mr. Cradock, Tillemont, and some other critics, that this was the consequence of his being a native of Tarsus. Dr. Lardner has, I think, produced unanswerable arguments against admitting that city to have been a colony, or what the Romans called municipium, that is, a place where all the citizens were free of Rome by birth. I therefore think it much more probable, that Paul’s father, or some other of his ancestors, might have been rewarded with the freedom of the city for his fidelity and bravery in some military service, as an auxiliary to the Romans, as Josephus says, that several Jews were. (Antiq. lib. xiv. cap. 10, [al 17.] § 13, & seq. ) See Dr. Lardner, Credib. Book I. chap. 10, § 6, Vol. I. p. 502—513. He observes in the next section, not only that the freedom of the city might be bought, but that some of Claudius’ favourites and creatures at last sunk the price scandalously low.
REFLECTIONS.

Blessed be God, that when his gospel is removed from one place, it is sent to another; nor shall it ever be totally rooted out of the world while seed-time and harvest, summer and winter, continue their revolutions. Adored be that grace which sent Paul and the other apostles to speak unto the Gentiles that they might be saved! The life of our souls was in that commission, and all our eternal hopes, take their rise from it. But what cruel malignity did these Jews express, whom all the wonders of this astonishing story could not convince, nor all the eloquence of it persuade! On the contrary, for no crime but that of being made the ambassador of divine mercy, and the instrument of deliverance to thousands of perishing sinners, they raise a cry against the ambassador of God, as if he were the most impious of blasphemers, and would have hurried him from the face of the earth as unfit to live upon it: How much less were they fit to continue here. But thus forbidding the apostles to speak to the Gentiles, (as he himself observes,) they filled up the measure of their iniquities; so that after the abused mercy of God had waited a little longer, his deserved wrath came upon them to the uttermost. (1 Thess. ii. 16.)

Most unrighteous was it in the Roman officer, on this popular clamour, to attempt putting this best of men to the torture; Most reasonable was Paul's plea, as a Roman citizen to decline that suffering. It is a prudence worthy of being imitated by the bravest of men, not to throw themselves into unnecessary difficulties.
Nor are we under any obligation as Christians to give up our civil privileges, which we are to esteem as the gifts of God, to every insolent and turbulent invader: In a thousand circumstances, gratitude to God, and duty to men, will oblige us to insist upon them; and a generous concern for those that are to come after us, should engage us to labour and strive that we may transmit them improved, rather than impaired, to posterity as yet unborn.

SECT. LI.

Paul being brought before the Sanhedrim, after having been unjustly smitten by the command of the high-priest, occasions a dissenting in the council, on which his sentence is delayed; but a conspiracy being formed against his life, he informs the tribune of it. Acts XXII. 30. XXIII. 1—22.

Acts XXII. 30. 
WHEN the Roman officer had rescued Paul from the people, in the manner already described, he lodged him in the castle that night; and on the morrow, desiring to know clearly and certainly of what he was accused by the Jews, which he could not make out from what had already passed, as he did not understand the Hebrew language, in which Paul had made his apology to them, he loosed him from his bonds in which he had laid him a close prisoner, and commanded the chief priests and all the other members of their Sanhedrim to come together and to hold a court: And bringing Paul down from the castle, he set him before them, that he might be examined and tried according to the laws and usages of his own country; that so the most seditious of the Jews might have no reason to complain of the manner in which they were treated.

And Paul looking attentively on the Sanhedrim, as he stood before it that he might observe whether he could recollect the faces of any whom he had formerly known in that court, said, Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience

Acts xxiii. 1. And Paul earnestly beholding the council, said, Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience

Acts xxii. 30.
Ananias the high-priest orders him to be smitten.

But Ananias the high priest, who knowing in his own heart his invertebrate enmity to Paul, and the steps he had openly taken for his destruction, thought himself insulted by such a solemn declaration of his innocence, commanded those that stood by him at the bar to smite him on the mouth, for what he represented as so insolent an assertion; which was accordingly done.

Then Paul, animated on a sudden by the secret impulse of a prophetic spirit, which bore him, as it were, for that moment beyond himself, said to him, God is about to smite thee in a very awful manner, O thou whited wall! thou false painted hypocrite! For sittest thou on the tribunal conscience before God, until this day.

And the high-priest Ananias commanded them that stood by him to smite him on the mouth.

Then said Paul unto him, God shall smite thee thou whited wall; for sittest thou to judge me after the law, and commandest me to be smitten.

I have even to this day conversed before God in all good conscience.] Paul could not intend by this to intimate, that he thought himself free from guilt while persecuting the Christians, since he so expressly declares the contrary elsewhere. (See 1 Tim. i. 12; 1 Cor. xvii. 9; Gal. i. 13.) He was only examined with respect to his conduct as a Christian, and therefore it would not have been pertinent here to have referred to his conduct while a persecuting Jew, though it were indeed true, that he did not then act against his conscience, how criminal soever he was in suffering it to continue misinformed. The plain sense of this passage is, that his conscience, when examined as in the sight of God, with respect to what they alleged him against him, did not charge him with any known and deliberate contradictions to its dictates; and so it was, in effect, a solemn and very pertinent appeal to the searcher of all hearts, that he had not devoted himself to the service of the gospel, in which he was now engaged, from any mean and dishonourable principle, but was fully convinced of the truth of it, and therefore prepared to abide all extremities in its defence. Well might there be in such a case a natural rally of joy, arising in an upright heart from a consciousness of its own integrity, amidst such violent calumnies as were now advanced against him.

Ananias the high-priest.] Dr. Benson, (Hist. Vol. ii. p. 221) Mr. Biscoe, (Boyle's Lect. chap. iii. § 3, p. 70—76,) and several others, have justly observed from Josephus, (Antiq. lib. xx. cap. 5, [al. 5.], § 2, 3; & cap. 6, [al. 5.], § 2,) that this was Ananias the son of Nebedaeus, who by his station was head of the Sanhedrim. He had formerly been sent prisoner to Rome, to give an account to Claudius Caesar of his behaviour, in the quarrel which happened between the Jews and Samaritans during the government of Cumanus in Judea, but was acquitted, probably by the intercession of Agrippa the younger. The difficulties which have been urged from Josephus against his being high-priest now, are answered by Mr. Biscoe in a very learned and judicious manner.

God is about to smite thee, O thou whited wall!] Alluding to the beautiful outside of some walls, which are full of dirt and rubbish within. The account Josephus gives of the character and fate of this wretch abundantly illustrates this speech of Paul. He might well be called a whited wall, not only as he committed this iniquity while gravely sitting in a sacred character on the tribunal of justice, but also as, at the same time that he carried it very plausibly towards the citizens, and stood high in their favour, he most impiously and cruelly defrauded the inferior priests of the subsistence which the divine law assigned them, so that some of them even perished for want, (Joseph. Antiq. lib. xx. cap. 9, [al. 8.], § 2.) And God did remarkably smite him, as, after his own house had been reduced to ashes in a tumult begun by his own son, he was besieged and taken in the royal palace, where, having in vain attempted to hide himself in an old aqueduct, he was dragged out and slain; (Joseph. Bell. Jud. lib. ii. cap. 17, [al. 18.], § 2, 6, 9,) an event, which happened about five years after this, in the very beginning of the Jewish war.
Paul rebukes him for it, and then makes his excuse.

4 And they that stood by, said, Revilest thou God's high-priest?

5 Then said Paul, I wist not, brethren, that he was the high-priest: for it is written, Thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of thy people.

In violation of the law commanded me to be smitten.] God in his law forbade all violence in judgment, (Lev. xix. 15.) Yet we find repeated insults of this very kind, indecent as they always are, offered to the prophets, (1 Kings xi. 24. Jer. xx. 2,) and even to Christ himself. (John xviii. 22.)

I was not aware that it was the high-priest.] This is a natural rendering of the words ἐκ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου, which cannot not be translated, I do not acknowledge him to be the high-priest; nor can it be imagined, that Paul would enter on so curious and so dangerous a question, as the justice of his accession to that office. Some have thought, he did not know him personally; but his habit and place in the Sanhedrim, might distinguish him; or if we were to suppose with Rivetus, that Paul, hearing the voice while looking another way, did not know from whence it came, the solution is utterly insufficient; for Paul's answer plainly shews, he knew the person speaking, whoever he were, to be a judge. It seems therefore much more convenient to follow the explanation of this matter given in the paraphrase, which will easily reconcile all that passed, with Christ's promise of being with his apostles when appearing before councils: (Mat. x. 19. Mark xiii. 11,) for according to us, Paul by inspiration uttered a true prediction, and then alleged a true fact to prevent any ill use of the circumstance in which it was spoken; only varying something, which he might justly have urged in his own vindication, and from which he had doubted right to recede, if he thought fit. In the mean time, the candour both of the historian and of the apostle is well worthy our remark.

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But Paul perceiving, as he looked about him, that the one part of the court were Sadducees, and the other Pharisees, cried out in the Sanhedrin, Men and brethren, I was by my education, and still am in my judgment, a Pharisee, as I was also the son of a Pharisee; nor is there any one more zealous for the great fundamental doctrine of that celebrated sect: And I am well satisfied, that if the whole secret of my prosecution were fairly and thoroughly laid open from its first principles, it would be found that it is for the hope I have of a future state, and the zeal with which I teach the resurrection of the dead, that I am now brought into judgment; nor would some of my greatest enemies have pressed such indignation against me, had not the whole tenor of my public teaching so evidently tended to confirm a doctrine against which they are so violently prejudiced.

7 And on this speaking this, the council fell to disputing, and there was presently a contention on this head, between the Pharisees and the Sadducees, several persons of each sect appearing warm in the debate: And the multitude was greatly divided: For it is well known that the Sadducees say, there is no resurrection, neither angel, nor separate spirit; but the Pharisees not only confess both, but contend earnestly for the certainty of the resurrection, and the real existence of angels and other spirits:

9 And upon this there was a great clamour in the assembly; and the scribes [who were] on the side of the Pharisees arose and contended, saying, We find no evil in this man, and can perceive no reason for his being condemned or detained; but if a spirit or an angel hath spoken to him, in the manner he represents, let us acquiesce, and wait the event; and as Gamaliel formerly expressed it among us, in an argument which then was judged by the Sanhedrin worthy of its regard.

6 But when Paul perceived that the one part were Sadducees, and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the council, Men and brethren, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee: of the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question.

7 And when he had so said, there arose a dissension between the Pharisees and the Sadducees; and the multitude was divided.

9 And there arose a great cry: and the scribes that were of the Pharisees part arose, and strove, saying, We find no evil in this man: but if a spirit or an angel hath spoken to him, let us not fight against God.

Footnotes:

[2] For the hope and resurrection of the dead, &c.] Orobo charges this upon Paul, as an artful manner of declining persecution, unworthy the character of an upright and generous man. (Limborch, Collat. cum Jud. p. 134, 165.) But there is no just reason for the charge, since this was a part, though not the whole of the truth as the chief thing, which enraged the Sadducees against Christianity, was the demonstration which it gave to the doctrine of a resurrection, which they so eagerly opposed. See Acts iv. 2, with the paraphrase. Vol. II. p. 537, and chap. v. 17, ibid. p. 553.
A tumult arising, the Tribune takes him away.

10 And when there arose a great dissent- 11 And the night following, the Lord stood by him, and said, The chief cap- tain fearing lest Paul should have been pul- led in pieces by them, commanded the sol- diers to go down, and to take him by force from among them, and to bring him into the castle.

12 And when it was day, certain of the Jews banded together, and bound themselves under a curse, saying, That they would neither eat nor drink till they had killed Paul: And the next day Paul being set in the castle, the chief captain commanded him to be brought into the council; and he called unto the scribes and to the elders of the Jews, and said, In your synagogues have we often said, That this Jesus of Nazareth shall be the Risen again to the second power of life according to the scriptures: Wherefore some of them which are their adversaries being persuaded byrible words, have sold themselves to have this man said, He is not dead, but is escaped from Jerusalem into Egypt; and he shall be here, and bring them away to the chief captain. Then had Paul said unto the chief captain, The king knoweth of these things; for before this very morning the chief captain sent me to Jerusalem, and gave me charge of this man; wherefore he sent him hither, having determined that he should stand before the council: and none of these things am I uncertain of, or speak amiss. Wherefore I beseech thee that thou wouldest let these men speak, and I will know why they have such an evill opinion of Paul. 13 And when he was set in the council, the scribes brought in the man which was accus- tomed to be called Silas, or Silbeus, (as it is written in the book of the prophets,) and when they had read the thing which was written, Paul said in the midst of them all, Alas ye Jews, and it were well for you, if ye had known what these things mean; but now ye shall be filled with all manner of evils. And when Paul ceased speaking, he said, Thus speaketh the Lord, Behold, I will send thee away to the heathen, and to the Gentiles. Then said he unto the chief captain, What meanest thou to do these men? 

11 And as a great disturbance arose, some of them urging that he should be set at liberty, while others eagerly insisted on his condemnation, the Tribune was informed of their disorderly proceedings; and fearing lest amidst the tu- mult Paul should be torn in pieces by them, he com- mandeth a party of the Roman soldiers to go down, and take him by force from the midst of them, and so to bring him up again into the castle of Antonia, from whence he had been led.

And after they had lodged him there, it came 11 to pass, that in the following night the Lord Jesus Christ appeared to Paul in a vision, and standing by him said, Be of good courage, Paul: for as thou hast testified of the things concerning me at Jerusalem, and all the malice of the Jews has not prevented thee from faithfully discharging thy commission, so thou must also bear thy testimony to me and my doctrine at Rome; and notwithstanding all the difficulties thou hast now before thee, I will support thee to go through the trial, and turn it abundantly to mine own glory, and to thy consolation.

12 And when it was day, some of the bigot- ted Jews, who were exceedingly provoked that Paul had thus been rescued from the council, resolv- ed that they would be the means of his destruction, and entering into a conspiracy, bound them- selves with a solemn curse, saying, That they would neither eat nor drink, till they had killed Paul. And though it was so black and horrid a design, yet they were more than forty of them who had made this rash and barbarous agree- ment. And having fixed upon a scheme for putting it in execution, they came without re- serve

**Notes:**

1. *Let us not fight against God.* When they mentioned it as a supposable case, that an angel might have spoken o him, they might probably allude to the many visions and revelations, which Paul had professed to have received in his late speech to the people, as Dr. Benson observes,Hist. Vol. II. p 224. The reader will perceive here a remarkable resemblance to the speech of Gamaliel, referred to the verse phrase; but it appears from Dr. Prideaux, (Connect. Vol. II. p. 599,) that this happened after the death of that celebrated rabbi.

2. *The Lord standing by him said,* &c.] This plainly shews, that our Lord approved the part Paul had acted before the Sanhed- rin, though some have censured it, without understanding or considering the circumstances of it. The pious as well as learned professor Witsius well observes, that it must be a greater consolation to so faithful a soldier of Christ as Paul was, having been thus approved and encouraged by his general, to be led on to further combats, than to be immediately dismissed. And such a temper he expresses, Phil. i. 20—26.
The Jews form a conspiracy against his life.

serve to the chief priests, and to those of the elders, whom they knew to be his enemies; and said, We are so transported with zeal at the outrage that has been done to our sacred law, that we have one and all bound ourselves by a solemn anathema, not to taste any thing of food till we have slain this Paul; whom we look upon as so notorious an enemy to God and his country, that if the course of public justice against him be obstructed, it will no doubt be a meritorious action, which you will certainly approve, as what must be pleasing to God himself, to take him off by such a method as this:

Now therefore, do you, with the other members of the Sanhedrin, signify it as your request to the Tribune, that he would bring him down from the castle to you to-morrow, as if you would more accurately examine and discuss what relates to him: and we are ready at all adventures, even at the hazard of our lives, to kill him before he can come near you: And we will manage the attack in such a manner that you shall not appear at all concerned in it, nor have any alarm about the matter, till you hear that he is actually dead.

But how privately soever this matter was conducted, the providence of God so ordered it, for the deliverance of his faithful servant from this inhuman and bloody conspiracy, that Paul's sister's son, hearing of the ambush, came, and entering into the castle of Antonia, where (as we observed before) he now lay confined, told Paul the whole story. And Paul calling one of the centurions to him, who commanded part of the cohort to the chief priests and elders, and said, We have bound ourselves under a great curse, that we will eat nothing until we have slain Paul.

Now therefore ye with the council, signify to the chief captain, that he bring him down unto you to-morrow, as though you would enquire something more perfectly concerning him: and we, or ever he come near, are ready to kill him.

And when Paul's sister's son heard of their lying in wait, he went and entered into the castle, and told Paul.

Then Paul called one
The Tribune is informed of their design.

The Tribune, therefore hearing this dismissed 22 the young man, with a charge, saying, [Be sure thou] tell no man that thou hast discovered these things to me, and depend upon it that I will bear in mind what thou hast told me, and do what is proper upon the occasion. And accordingly he took immediate measures for Paul's security from this intended assassination, of which a particular account will hereafter be given.

IMPROVE-

scr. II.

Acts XXIII.

17

(one of the centurions unto him, and said, Bring this young man unto the chief captain: for he hath a certain thing to tell him. 18 So he took him, and brought him to the chief captain, and said, Paul the prisoner called me unto him, and prayed me to bring this young man unto thee, who hath something to say unto thee. 19 Then the chief captain took him by the hand, and went with him aside privately, and asked him, What is that thou hast to tell me? 20 And he said, The Jews have agreed to desire thee, that thou wouldst bring down Paul to-morrow into the council, as though they would inquire somewhat of him more perfectly. 21 But do not thou yield unto them: for they lie in wait for him of them more than forty men, which have bound themselves with an oath, that they will neither eat nor drink, till they have killed him: and now are they ready looking for a promise from thee. 22 So the chief captain then let the young man depart, and charged him, See thou tell no man that thou hast shewed these things to me. cohort under the Tribune, presented his kinsman to him, and said, I desire thou wouldest conduct this young man to the Tribune, for he hath something of importance to tell him. He therefore took and led him to the Tribune, and having introduced him, said, Paul the prisoner calling me to him, desired that I would bring this young man to thee, who has something of considerable importance to tell thee, though what it is I do not at all know. And the Tribune in a very obliging and condescending manner taking him by the hand and leading him into a retired place, where none might over-hear them, inquired of him, saying, What is it that thou hast to tell me? speak freely, for I shall give thee an attentive hearing. And he said to the Tribune, I have received certain intelligence, that the Jews have agreed together to ask thee, that thou wouldst bring down Paul to-morrow to the Sanhedrim, as if they would enquire something more accurately concerning him: But if thou hast any regard for the life of so innocent and worthy a man, do not be prevailed upon by them, to order him to be so brought down; for there are more than forty of them lie in an ambush for him, who have obliged themselves by a curse neither to eat nor drink till they have killed him, and they are now ready, with their weapons as it were in their hands, to execute this their murderous purpose, waiting only an order from thee to bring him by the place where they are posting themselves, in expectation it will prove the signal for his death. 

m Taking him by the hand, &c.] It is observable, that Lysias seems to have conducted this whole affair, like a man of great integrity and prudence.
Next to the history of the great Captain of our salvation, as recorded by the holy evangelists, none of the Christian heroes of whom we read makes a brighter figure than Paul; nor is there any who seems a spectacle more worthy the view of angels, or God himself: Nobly supported in the midst of persecutions and indignities, by the testimony of his conscience as to the integrity with which he had walked before God, and therefore assured of the divine aid, he appears superior to all human injuries. Most unrighteously did the high-priest command that mouth to be smitten which had spoken the words of truth and soberness; Most justly did God verify the prediction of his faithful, though despised servant, and smile that whited wall with speedy destruction which had stood in such a haughty opposition to his gospel.

Paul might have urged a great deal in defence of what he had said, and yet he chose prudently to decline that defence; and seems much more solicitous to prevent the abuse of what might appear dubious, than to assert his own cause to the utmost that it would bear. Thus should we sometimes be ready, as the Psalmist beautifully expresses it, to restore what we took not away, (Psal. lxix. 4.) and for the peace of society, and the edification of others, should be content to wave apologies which we might justly offer. Let us learn particularly to reverence that authority with which God hath clothed magistrates; and he very cautious how we speak evil of the rulers of our people. Let the ministers of the gospel especially be cautious of it, lest the ministry be upon that account blamed, and their own character exposed, as if they were trumpeters of sedition, rather than ambassadors of the Prince of peace.

Our Lord had given it in charge to his apostles that they should be wise as serpents, and harmless as doves; (Mat. x. 16,) both these characters are joined in Paul’s behaviour on this important occasion: It was no dishonest artifice to divide the counsel, and to engage the favour of the Pharisees, by reminding them of what, if they considered the circumstances of the case, must needs appear to them to be truth; that it was his zeal for the doctrine of the resurrection that brought upon him a great deal of that opposition which he was then encountering, and that the most convincing evidence of that doctrine depended on the facts which, as an apostle of Jesus, he publicly maintained. And it had been most happy for the Pharisees had they always borne in their own minds the caution they now gave the Sadducees, to take heed of fighting against God. May none of us provoke the Lord to jealousy, as if we were stronger than he, which we shall certainly do by rejecting the tidings...
The Tribune sends away Paul under a guard by night.

Acts XXIII. 23.

In the last section it was shewn, how the conspiracy which the Jews had formed against Paul's life had been discovered to the Roman Tribune: Now as this officer was a very equitable and worthy person, he was determined to consult the safety of his prisoner, whose innocence he was the more convinced of, from such base methods taken to destroy him; and finding it necessary for this purpose to remove him from Jerusalem, he called to him two of the centurions in whom he could particularly confide, and said to them, Prepare immediately the two hundred soldiers under your command that they may be ready...
And gives an account of him in a letter to Felix.

Ready to go directly to Caesarea; and take with them a farther guard of seventy horsemen, and two hundred spearmen, and let them begin their march by the third hour of the night; (that is, at nine in the evening;) And provide beasts, to set Paul upon, if a change should be necessary, and see that you conduct him in safety, and with all convenient expedition, to Felix, the governor of the province.  

And he also wrote an epistle to Felix on this occasion, the contents of which are expressed in this Copy,  

Claudius Lysias, the commander of a body of Roman soldiers at Jerusalem to his excellency Felix, the governor of this province, [sendeth] greeting with the sincerest wishes of health and prosperity. This comes to inform you, that as this man, who is called Paul, was seized by a multitude of the Jews, who made a sudden insurrection on his account, and had like to have been slain by them, I came upon them with a party of soldiers, and rescued him from their furious assault: And I am the better pleased I had an opportunity of doing it, as I have since learnt that he is a Roman citizen: And desiring so much the more on this account to know particularly what was the crime of which they accused him, I brought him before the Sanhedrim; imagining that was the most proper tribunal to discuss a cause of such a nature, as from general circumstances, I apprehend this must be. And after they had examined him, I found he was accused of no great crime, and that a cry was raised against him, only concerning some nice questions of their law; but that nothing was charged upon him, of which, if there had been sufficient proof to have convicted him, he would have been worthy

*And I have since learnt that he is a Roman.] As it appears from the preceding story, that when Lysias first rescued Paul out of the hands of the populace, he did not so much as imagine him to be a Roman, it is plain, that μέτοχος here (as Grotius well observes) is put for μέτοχος, according to the turn given in the paraphrase; and consequently, no shadow of an argument can be drawn from hence to prove, that the Jews had then a power of putting those of their countrymen to death, who were not Roman citizens, as Dr. Lardner has well argued in his large, and I think very conclusive, examination of this question. (Credib. Book I. chap. 2. See especially § 10, Vol. I. p. 144.—164.) Beza thinks, Lysias represents the fact a little unfairly, and would have made Felix believe, that he knew Paul was a Roman before he rescued him; but his conduct appears in the main so honourable, that I rather think, he only means in the general to intimate, that he had on the whole been more solicitous to provide for Paul's security, out of regard to his being a Roman citizen.

b Brought
50 And when it was told me, how that the Jews laid wait for the man, I sent straightway to thee, and gave commandment to his accusers also, to say before thee what they had against him, farewell.

31 Then the soldiers, as it was commanded them, took Paul, and brought him by night to Antipatris.

32 On the morrow they left the horsemen to go with him, and returned to the castle.

33 Who when they came to Caesarea, and delivered the epistle to the

The soldiers therefore, as it was commanded them, taking up Paul, and mounting him according to the kind provision which Lysias had made, brought him by night-marches through Nicopolis and Lydda to Antipatris, a city within the borders of the tribe of Manasseh, which lay not far from the Mediterranean sea, about thirty-eight miles distant from Jerusalem. And the next day after their arrival at that city, as they concluded he was now pretty secure from danger, the two companies of foot returned with the spearmen to the castle at Jerusalem, leaving the seventy horsemen to go with him to the end of his journey; Who accordingly guarded him the rest of the way, and entering with him into Caesarea, which was about thirty miles from Anti-

b Brought him by night to Antipatris.] Very different accounts are given of the situation of Antipatris, which must however have been north-west of Jerusalem, as it was in the way from thence to Caesarea. Its ancient name was Caphasalana, (1 Macc. vii. 31; and Joseph. Antiq. lib. xii. cap. 10, [al. 17], § 4,) or Chaborazab; (Joseph. Antiq. lib. xiii. cap. 15, [al. 23.] § 1;) but Herod the Great rebuilt it, and gave it the name of Antipatris, in honour of his father Antipater. (Joseph. Bell. Jud. lib. i. cap. 21, [al. 16], § 9; & Antiq. lib. xvi. cap. 5, [al. 9], § 2.) Some have supposed, it was but eighteen or twenty miles from Jerusalem; but Mr. Biscoe (whose account is followed in the paraphrase,) has shewn, it was something more than thirty-eight of our miles, which must have been too far for one night's march; he therefore very well observes, it is not necessary to conclude, that Paul was carried thither in one night, or that the soldiers returned in one day. It is only said, that they travelled by night, which they might do, and rest by the way; nor is it probable they took Paul with them from Jerusalem at night and reached Caesarea the next day, when it appears from Josephus, that from Jerusalem to Caesarea was six hundred furlongs, or near seventy miles, (Bell. Jud. lib. i. cap. 3, § 5; & Antiq. lib. xiii. cap. 11, [al. 12], § 2.) See Mr. Biscoe at Boyle's Lect. chap. 10, p. 388—391.

e Herod's
Ananias and the elders go and appear against him.

Antipatris, acquitted themselves of their trust; and delivering the epistle they had brought from Lysias to Felix the governor, they presented Paul also before him, and so completed the affair with which they had been charged.

34 And when the governor had read the letter, and understood that Paul was sent as one accused of the Jews, that he should try his cause, he presently asked of what province he was: And being informed that he was of Cilicia, I will hear thee, said he, and thoroughly examine into this matter, when thine accusers are also come; which I suppose will be in a few days. And in the mean time he commanded him to be kept bound in Herod’s praetorium, where a body of soldiers was quartered, under whose guard prisoners were often detained.

Acts XXIV. 1. And according to the expectation of Felix, it was not long before he had occasion to call for Paul again; for after he had been but five days at Caesarea, the high priest Ananias, apprehending the matter to be of the utmost importance, came down in person, with several of the elders, who were members of the Sanhedrim; and they brought along with them a certain orator named Tertullus, whose business it was to open the cause, and to harangue the governor in the most agreeable manner that he could: And they all made their appearance in form before the governor, and advanced a general accusation against Paul on which they desired to be more particularly heard. And he being called to hear his charge, and make his defence, Tertullus began to accuse him, saying, with more regard to interest than truth.

May it please your excellency, as we enjoy great peace by your means, and many illustrious deeds, the governor, presented Paul also before him.

34 And when the governor had read the letter, he asked of what province he was. And when he understood that he was of Cilicia;

53 I will hear thee, said he, when thine accusers are also come. And he commanded him to be kept in Herod’s judgment-hall.

Acts XXIV. 1. And after five days, Ananias, as the high-priest descended with the elders, and with a certain orator named Tertullus, who informed the governor against Paul.

2 And when he was called forth, Tertullus began to accuse him, saying—

—Seeing that by thee we enjoy great quietness, and that very
very worthy deeds are done unto this nation by thy providence,
deed are happily done to this whole Jewish nation, and many disorders rectified, by the continual care and vigilance of your prudent administration: We accept [it] always, and in all places, most noble Felix, with all imaginable thankfulness, and it grieves us to be under this unfortunate necessity of troubling you with our complaints, though we are well assured of your generous disposition to remedy them. Nevertheles, it is impossible that the wisest governors should prevent some troubles arising to the State under their care, while so much sedition and wickedness remain in those who ought to behave as orderly subjects; and therefore that I may not trouble you further with any laboured introduction, I humbly beseech you to hear us what we have to offer in a few words, according to your well known goodness and humanity, with your usual candour, and to bear with me while I briefly open the charge against this notorious offender, whom we are obliged to pursue even to this august tribunal.

For indeed to speak with that plainness which truth and justice require on such an occasion, we have found this man a most pestilent fellow, and a mover of sedition among all the Jews throughout the world, and a ring-leader of the sect of the Nazarenes.

Who also hath gone about to profane the temple: whom we took,
either the piety, or the policy, of the great men of antiquity who made use of such language. On the other hand, apparent slights put upon religion by persons in public stations are proofs of a weak understanding, that cannot fail of making them contemptible, not only among all religious, but all prudent men.

[Has attempted also to profane the temple.] Tertullus artfully mentions this, as the most express fact he had to charge upon him,
persons within the sacred boundaries from which they are excluded, even by your authority as well as by our law, on pain of death. As he is one therefore who has rendered himself on such a variety of accounts obnoxious and odious to our whole nation, and against whom we have so many accusations, we seized him a few days ago as a notorious offender, and would have judged him according to our law, which in such a case as this it is well known, we had a right to execute in its fullest extent, and might have done it even on the spot. But Lysias the tribune, commander of the Roman garrison in Jerusalem, coming upon us with a great and armed force, took him away out of our hands, and so interrupted the course of our just and regular proceedings against him: Nor had we troubled you with hearing us on this occasion, had not he sent him hither, commanding his accusers to come to you, if they intended to prosecute the affair any farther; by which means you might yourself, an a proper examination, take cognizance of all these things of which we accuse him. We promise ourselves therefore, from the known wisdom, equity, and goodness of your excellency, that as we can all aver the truth of these facts on which we ground our charge, you will please to consider the importance of the case, in which the national honour, safety, and religion are so nearly concerned, and will either punish this notorious criminal as he deserves, or order him back again to Jerusalem, and interpose your authority, which is here supreme, to prevent any farther opposition to the legal proceedings of the Sanhedrim against him.

And when Tertullus had concluded his smooth and flattering oration, the Jews also who were present gave their assent to all he had urged, saying to Felix, that it was true, that all these things were so as he had alleged in his discourse and took, and would have judged according to our law.

5 But the chief captain Lysias came upon us, and with great violence took him away out of our hands.

8 Commanding his accusers to come unto thee, by examining of whom thyself mayest take knowledge of all these things, whereof we accuse him.

9 And the Jews also assented saying, that these thing were so.
Reflections on the charge advanced against Paul.

and that he had truly represented the cause which had now brought them to Caesarea.

And on this Felix ordered Paul to offer any thing which he had to urge in his own defence, of which, with the issue of the cause, an account will be given in the next section.

IMPROVEMENT.

To hear the most amiable goodness injure by false and virulent accusations, is what we have been accustomed to, in the perusal of this sacred history, in which we have now advanced so far. The surprise of it therefore is abated. But who would not lament, to see the great talent of eloquence, in itself so noble, and capable of such excellent use for the public good, abused to such infamous purposes, on the one hand to varnish over crimes, and on the other to render innocence suspected, and virtue itself odious! Had that of Tertullus been much greater, than it appears by this specimen, it would only have served to perpetuate his own shame to posterity for the mean flattery he addressed to Felix, and the cruel and unjust invectives which he poured out against Paul. But history is juster than panegyric or satire, and has left us the character of the one, and the other, painted in its true colours: And much more evidently shall every character appear in the justest light before the tribunal of a righteous God, where Paul, and Felix and Tertullus, and Ananias, are to meet again. There may we, with the apostle, have honour and praise, whatever eloquence may now arraign, whatever authority may now condemn us!

In the mean time, where we enjoy great peace under the magistrates which Providence has set over us, and worthy deeds are done by them for the honour of God and the good of mankind, let us always thankfully accept it, and take care ourselves to be quiet in the land. Should they, who call themselves the followers of Jesus, be indeed pestilent fellows and movers of sedition, they would act not only beneath their character as Christians, but directly contrary to it, and in a manner which must by necessary consequence forfeit it; nor should they affect to be ringleaders in sects and parties. Their master is the prince of peace: In his service let them exert themselves, but always in the spirit of love, labouring by the meekness of their tempers, and the usefulness of their lives, to silence, and if possible to shame, the clamours of their ignorant and malicious enemies.
Paul vindicates himself from the accusation which the Jews by the mouth of Tertullus had advanced against him, in such a manner, that Felix only orders him to be kept under a gentle confinement at Cesarea. Acts XXIV. 10—23.

Acts XXIV. 10.

TERTULLUS, and the Jewish priests and elders who were come from Jerusalem to Cesarea with him, opened their charge against Paul, in the presence of Felix the Roman governor, in the manner which was represented in the former section. Then Paul also, after the governor had made a signal, by his nodding to him, that it was now his time to speak, answered the accusation they had brought against him in terms to this purpose:

Knowing that thou, O Felix, hast been for several years a president and judge to this nation, and consequently art not wholly unacquainted with its customs, or with the temper of its rulers and people, I answer for myself with the more cheerfulness in thy presence: And after all that has been said by my accusers, I have no cause to fear they should impose upon thy judgment by the charges they have brought against me, as thou mayest easily know by evidence which cannot
He was not guilty of sedition, but owns he is a Christian.

12 And they neither found me in the temple disputing with any man, neither raising up the people, neither in the synagogues, nor in the city:

13 Neither can they prove the things whereof they now accuse me.

14 But this I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and the prophets:

15 And have hope towards God, which they cannot be disputed, that it is no more than twelve days ago, the greatest part of which I have been confined, since I went to worship at Jerusalem, and publicly to pay my homage there to God, on my return from a long journey I had taken into distant parts: And so far was I from attempting to excite sedition, that I aver it to the face of these mine adversaries, and defy any one to prove the contrary, that they neither found me so much as disputing with any man in the temple, nor making any where an insurrection or any manner of disturbance among the people, either there, or in the synagogues, or in any other place in the city of Jerusalem. Nor can they, notwithstanding all their positive assertions, produce any fair and sufficient proof of this, or any other of the things concerning which they now accuse me, though I am charged with so much confidence as a pestilent fellow, and a mover of sedition.

But as to what they have alleged against me with regard to the sect of the Nazarenes, this I confess unto thee, and am not ashamed publicly to avow it in the presence of the greatest personages upon earth, that after the way which they call a sect or heresy, so do I worship the God of my fathers, even according to the rules and precepts which Christ my great master has given; which is far from being heresy in any infamous sense of the word, since it is most consistent with firmly believing all things which are written, both in the law and in the prophets, and is indeed most evidently built on those sacred oracles, when rightly understood and explained. And while I act on this maxim, I rejoice in the midst of all the tribulations which can befall me, having a cheerful and assured hope

After the way which they call heresy.] I cannot but think this a place, where the word ἀδερφαί, which I own to be often indifferent, is used in a bad sense: for Paul plainly intimates, that Christianity did not deserve the name they gave it: Yet, while it was not the national religion, but its professors were distinguished from most of their countrymen by their adherence to Christ, as the leader they chose to follow, they might properly be called a sect or a party of men, unless the very word sect, or party be taken always in a bad signification, which none well acquainted with the Greek language can imagine.

The God of my fathers.] It has been justly observed, that this was a very proper plea before a Roman magistrate, as it proved, that he was under the protection of the Roman laws, since the Jews were so; whereas, had he introduced the worship of new gods, he had forfeited that protection: And Eisner has shewn, that a regard to paternal duties was held honourable among the Greeks and Romans.—

(Obser. Vol. I. p. 475—475.)
They have represented me indeed as a profane and lawless person, as if I had thrown contempt upon religion, and done them a great deal of wrong; but so far have I been from doing any thing to injure or expose the Jews, to whom by birth I belong, or from attempting to profane the temple, as these my enemies falsely pretend, that I have given many public and important proofs of my particular regard for the good of my country, and of the veneration that I have for all that is sacred. Accordingly now after several years, which I had spent in other parts, I came to Jerusalem, to bring alms to the poor of my nation, which I had been collecting for them in the Gentile provinces where I had any interest; and went, as one that had a vow, to have made the offerings which the law requires: (Compare chap xxvi. 26.)

Upon which, at the very time when I was thus employed, some Asiatic Jews, who raised the first outcry against me, found me purified in the temple, which it is manifest I had a right to enter as a Jew, and where I attended neither with any multitude about me, nor with any design of raising a tumult, as they have took upon them to insinuate, but beholding myself with that composure and reverence which became the act of solemn devotion in which I was engaged.

Those very persons therefore who began the commotion, they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and of the unjust.

And upon this account, in the firm expectation and the hope I have of this, I daily exercise myself, and make it the continual care and study of my life, to have always an inoffensive conscience, both towards God and towards men; that so, whatever accusations are brought against me, my own heart may not condemn me as long as I live, but I may always find a support within, amidst all the injuries I may meet with in a mistaken and unkind world.

And herein do I exercise myself to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men.

Now after many years, I came to bring alms to my nation, and offerings.

Whereupon certain Jews from Asia, found me purified in the temple, neither with multitude, nor with tumult.

Who ought to have

And upon this account, &c. I am sensible the phrase of τινός, which literally signifies in this, is ambiguous, and may refer to what goes before, or to what follows: but, as in the latter construction it seems almost an expletive, and has great weight and spirit in the former, I choose with Grotius to explain it as referring to his hope of a resurrection. That of τινός sometimes signifies on this account is shown by Raphelius, Annot. ex Xen. p. 185.
have been here before thee, and object, if they had ought against me:

20 Or else let these same here say, if they have found any evil-doing in me, while I stood before the council.

21 Except it be for this one voice; that I cried standing among them, Touching the resurrection of the dead I am called in question by you this day.

23 And when Felix heard these things, having more perfect knowledge of that way, he deferred them, and said, When Lysias the chief captain shall come down, I will know the uttermost of your matter.

[After I have been more accurately informed concerning this way.] The words in the original are very ambiguous, and might be rendered, That Felix when he had heard these things, having been more accurately informed concerning this way of Christianity, and knowing it not to be so mischievous a thing as these accusers suggested, "put them off." But I rather think with Beza, Grotius, and others, that they are all the words of Felix, and take the meaning to be, "That he would take an opportunity of being more particularly informed of this sect, and of its aspect on the public tranquility, and, when Lysias should come, and give him an account of what he had observed concerning it, as well as of the circumstances attending Paul's apprehension, &c. he would determine the affairs." Which answer was the more proper, as Paul did not deny, that he was indeed a leading person among the Christians, which made a part of their accusation; and we soon after find, that Felix sent for Paul to give him an account of his religion, ver. 24, and endeavoured by this, as well as other means, to inform himself in it.
the Tribune comes down to Caesarea, and gives me an account of what he knows as to the facts in question, I will take farther cognizance of the affair between you, and will be ready to hear any witnesses, on one hand, or the other which either party may think proper to produce, that I may finally determine it.

23 And in the mean time, dismissing the assembly, he commanded the centurion, to whom he had before been committed, to keep Paul as a prisoner at large, and let him have all the liberty consistent with securing him, and to hinder none of his friends from assisting [him] or coming to him: thereby plainly shewing, that he was convinced, it was merely a malicious prosecution, and that he was a person no way dangerous to the public.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. We here behold the righteous as bold as a lion, under false accusations most confidently advanced by persons of the highest rank, and the most sacred, (though by a strange contrast) at the same time the most detestable character: And the more Felix was exercised in affairs, the more easily might he discern the genuine traces of innocence and integrity in his whole defence, to which, plain as it was, he seems to have paid more regard, than to all the complimental and insinuating harangue of Tertullus; so great is the native force of truth, even on minds not entirely free from some corrupt bias!

14 Justly did Paul dare to avow his serving God according to the purity of gospel-institutions, by whomsoever it might be called heresy; nor need any fear that charge who make scripture the standard of their faith, and in the sincerity of their hearts seek inward divine teachings, that they may understand the sense of it: taking care not to run before their guide; and, with this injured servant of Christ, making it their daily exercise to maintain, in the whole of their conversation, a conscience void of offence towards God and men: A noble, though in some instances an arduous exercise;

5 To hinder none of his friends from assisting him.] This was a circumstance graciously ordered by divine Providence, which would make Paul's confinement much lighter than it could otherwise have been, and give him an opportunity of much greater usefulness. Raphelius shews, (Annot. ex. Xen. p. 185, 186;) that the word vengean is sometimes used for assistance in general, where personal ministration and attendance is out of the question; and as it is here distinguished from, and prefixed to, coming to him, it may probably signify sending him food, books or other accommodations. Compare Luke viii. 3.

Drusilla
ercise; such an exercise, that he who maintains it may look forward with pleasure to the unseen world, and, through the grace of God in a Redeemer, may entertain a cheerful hope of that resurrection: which, how terrible soever it may be to the unjust, shall be to all the righteous the consummation of their joys and of their glory.

Whatever danger such may incur in consequence of a steady regard to that hope, let them courageously commit themselves to him that judgeth righteously, who knows how to raise them up protectors where they might least expect it, and to make, as in this instance, those that are strangers to religion and virtue themselves, the means of delivering them from unreasonable and wicked persecutors, and not only of guarding their lives from violence, but of securing to them many conveniences and comforts.

SECT. LIV.

Paul, after having been heard by Felix several times, and once with great conviction, is nevertheless left a prisoner by him, when Festus his successor arrived at Cæsarea, before whom, being again accused by the Jews, he is obliged to appeal unto Cæsar. Acts XXIV. 24, to the end; XXV. 1—12.

Acts XXVI. 24.

And after certain days, when Felix came with his wife Drusilla, which was a Jewess, he sent for Paul, and heard him concerning the faith in Christ.


And after Paul had been kept some days in this gentle confinement at Cæsarea, Felix, who had been absent for a short time, coming thither again with Drusilla his wife, who was a Jewess, sent for Paul, that he might hear from his own mouth what were the principles of his religion, and might gratify her curiosity as well as his own, in obliging that celebrated prisoner to give some account of himself before them; and he heard him discourse at large concerning that faith in Christ as the Messiah, which he taught

* Drusilla his wife, who was a Jewess. * Josephus gives us a particular account of this lady, who was the daughter of Herod Agrippa, and sister of that Agrippa mentioned in the next section. She had been married to Azizus, king of the Emesenes; but Felix, being struck with her beauty, which was remarkably great, made use of the agency of one Simon, a wicked Jew, who professed himself a magician, to persuade her to abandon her husband, and marry him; which more to avoid the envy of her sister Bernice, than out of love to Felix, she did, though Azizus had but a little before submitted to circumcision, and so embraced Judaism, as the condition of the nuptials. She was afterwards (according to Dr. Hudson's interpretation of a dubious passage of Josephus, supported by the express testimony of Zonaras,) consumed with the son she had by Felix in a terrible eruption of Vesuvius. (See Joseph. Antiq. lib. xx. cap. 7, [at. 5.] § 1, 2.) That learned editor justly observes, on the testimony of Tacitus, (Hist. lib. v. cap. 9,) that Felix was also married to another Drusilla, (probably before this;) the grand-daughter of Antony and Cleopatra. See also Dr. Lardner's Credid. Book I. chap. 1, § 8, p. 41—43.
taught as of so great importance. But as Paul knew the character of his hearers, he took occasion to attend what he delivered on this subject with proper remarks, concerning the obligations we are naturally under to the moral law, the guilt incurred in various instances by the breach of it, and the account finally to be given to God; all which render the knowledge of a Saviour, and a cordial acceptance of him, so absolutely necessary; and adding such illustrations as might best suit the characters and circumstances of the persons to whom he was addressing, he particularly reasoned concerning righteousness, as he knew Felix was an unjust and oppressive governor: and concerning temperance, as he knew that both he and Drusilla had notoriously violated it, she having left her lawful husband to cohabit with him; and to inforce these reasonings, he faithfully admonished all that heard him of an awful and tremendous judgment that was certainly to come, at which the highest personages should appear, and stand upon equal terms with others before that righteous tribunal. And while he was copiously and seriously insisting on these important subjects, as one who felt the weight of what he said, Felix was so deeply impressed, that he could not conceal the inward perturbation of his mind, but trembling in a manner that was apparent to Paul and all that were present, answered him, Go thy way for this time, for I have other engagements before me which require my attendance; and I will take some future opportunity to call for thee, and hear thee talk more largely on these subjects than the urgency of my affairs will now admit.

And

b Concerning righteousness, and temperance. How suitable this discourse was to the character and circumstances of so unjust and lewd a prince, may appear from the preceding note, and note c on ver. 2, p. 250.

c And I will take some future opportunity. This the phrase οἵτινες εἰς μέλλοντα τιμίως ἄγων ἀλλήλου ἀκούειν, fully expresses. He thought, it did not become the dignity of a judge on the bench to receive even such oblique admonitions and reproofs from a prisoner, and therefore might really intend to give him a fuller audience in private. Paul must no doubt discern those marks of confusion, that would be so apparent in his countenance, which would give him some hopes of succeeding in this important attempt for such a conversion, and consequently would give him spirit, when he resumed the discourse. This must naturally increase in Felix a conviction of his innocence, and esteem for his virtues yet, in spite of all, he was so far from reforming his life in general, that he would not do justice to Paul, however the conviction might perhaps prevail so far, as to engage him to persist in his resolution of not delivering him to the Jews. How affecting an instance and illustration of the treachery of the human heart!
26 He hoped also that money should have been given him of Paul, that he might loose him; wherefore he sent for him the oftener, and communi-
ced with him.

27 But after two years, Portius Festus came into Felix room: and Felix, willing to shew the Jews a pleasure, left Paul bound.

And this he said, as he hoped also at the same
time that money would be given him by Paul,
that he might set him at liberty; for he had observed what he hinted in his defence against
the Jews, (ver. 17,) that the aims of the Chris-
tians had been deposited in his hands, upon which
account he hoped for some considerable ransom;
and therefore, in this mean and dishonest view,
he sent the more frequently for him, and dis-
coursed with him, but never appeared under
equal impressions any more.

Now after Paul had been in custody till two
years were ended, Felix was succeeded in his go-
vernment of that province by Portius Festus:
And as he knew that he had by his oppressive
administration furnished the people with abun-
dant matter of accusation against him, Felix
being willing to ingratiate himself with the
Jews at quitting the government, in a vain hope
that it might prevent them from pursuing him
with their complaints, left Paul a prisoner;
though he was in his own conscience persuaded,
not only of the innocence, but of the worth of his
character.

When Festus therefore was come into the pro-
vince of Judea, he had no sooner took possession
of the government, but after three days he went
up from Caesarea, which was the usual residence
of the Roman governors, to Jerusalem, the
capital city; both that he might gratify his
curiosity in the sight of so celebrated a place,
and also that he might there, as at the fountain-
head, inform himself of the present state of the
ir public affairs. And the high-priest, and se-
veral persons of the chief rank among the Jews,
appeared before him with an accusation against
Paul;

He shifts it off, and leaves Paul a prisoner.

\[\text{He hoped also that money would be given him, }&; \text{c.} \]
\[\text{He might not only have a view to the money collected by Paul, which he}
\text{brought to Jerusalem; but perhaps he might also imagine, that, Paul being so}
\text{considerable a person among the Christians, his charitable act, that had sold their pos-
sessions to maintain their poor brethren, would}
\text{contribute largely for his deliverance.}

\[\text{Left Paul a prisoner.} \]
\[\text{It has already been observed, note e on chap. xxiv. 2, p.} \]
\[\text{250,} \]
\[\text{that this base artifice did not prevent the clamorous accusations from following}
\text{him to Rome, which had certainly ruined him, had not the interest of his brother}
Pallas prevailed to obtain his pardon from
Nero. How much more effectually had he}
\text{consulted the peace of his mind, and on the whole the security of his fortune too, had}
\text{reformed his life on Paul's admonition, and cultivated those serious impressions}
\text{which were once so strongly made upon his conscience!—It was during the two years}
\text{of Paul's imprisonment here, that those contentsions arose between the Jews and}
\text{Gentiles, as to their respective rights in}
\text{Caesarea, which, after many tumults and slaughters of the Jews, were inflamed, ra-
ther than appeased, by the hearing at}
\text{Rome, and did a great deal towards exasper-
ating the Jewish nation to that war, which}
\text{ended in its utter ruin. See Joseph.}
\text{Bek. Jud. ii. Lib. cap. 13, [al. 12.]} \]
\[\text{§ 7; } \]
\[\text{§ 8; cap. 14, [al. 13.]} \]
\[\text{§ 4, 5.} \]
\[\text{Laying} \]
Festus succeeding Felix, is applied to by the Jews.

Paul; and earnestly intreated him that he would not, as they pretended Lysias and Felix had done, obstruct the course of public justice against one whom they knew to be so notorious an offender; Begging it as the only favour they desired against him, that he would send for him to Jerusalem to be judged there; forming a scheme at the same time in their own secret purposes, of laying an ambush of desperate wretches for him, who they knew would readily undertake to intercept his journey, and to kill him by the way. But Festus prudently answered, as God inclined his heart, that as he had business of another kind to employ him while he continued at Jerusalem, he thought it best Paul should be kept a while longer at Cesarea, and that he himself would shortly set out [for that place.] Therefore said he, let those of you who are best able to manage the prosecution, and who can most conveniently undertake the journey, go down along with [me,] and if there be anything criminal in this man, for which he should be punished by the Roman laws, let them accuse him in my hearing.

And thus having continued among them more than ten days, he went down, as he had said, to Cesarea; and several of the Jews attended him, as being determined to lose no time, but to prosecute the affair in the most strenuous manner they possibly could. And the next day, sitting down on the tribunal, he commanded Paul to be brought before him. And when he appeared, the Jews who came down from Jerusalem, presented themselves in a numerous company, and stood round about him; bringing many heavy accusations against Paul, like those which Tertullus had the Jews, informed him against Paul, and besought him.

3 And desired favour against him, that he would send for him to Jerusalem; laying wait in the way to kill him.

4 But Festus answered, that Paul should be kept at Cesarea, and that he himself would depart shortly thither.

5 Let them therefore, said he, which among you are able, go down with me, and accuse this man, if there be any wickedness in him.

6 And when he had tarried among them more than ten days, he went down unto Cesarea; and the next day sitting in the judgment-seat, commanded Paul to be brought.

7 And when he was come, the Jews which came down from Jerusalem, stood round about, and laid many and grievous complaints against Paul, which
which they could not prove;

8 While he answered for himself, Neither against the law of the Jews, neither against the temple, nor yet against Caesar have I offended any thing at all.

But Festus willing to do the Jews a pleasure, answered Paul and said, Wilt thou go up to Jerusalem, and there be judged of these things before me?

Then said Paul, I stand at Caesar’s judgment-seat, where I ought to be judged: to the Jews have I done no wrong, as thou very well knowest.

For if I be an offender, or have committed any thing worthy of death, I refuse not to die: but if there be none of these things

had formerly advanced before Felix, which nevertheless it was evident that they were not by any means able to prove by proper witnesses.

Paul therefore, while he answered for himself, insisted on his innocence, and said, Whatever my accusers take upon them to allege against me, I aver, that neither against the law of the Jews, to which I was expressing my regard at the very time I was seized, nor against the temple, to which I came with a design to worship there, nor against Caesar, to whom I always have behaved as a peaceable subject, have I committed any offence at all: I openly deny their charge in every branch of it, and challenge them to make it out by proper evidence in any instance or in any degree.

But Festus, willing to ingratiate himself with the Jews by so popular an action at the beginning of his government, answered Paul and said, I am a stranger in a great measure to the questions in debate among you, which the Jewish council must no doubt understand much better; wilt thou therefore go up to Jerusalem, when I return thither, and there be judged before me in their presence concerning these things, that so the persons who were eye-witnesses may be more easily produced, and I may have the sanction of the Sanhedrin’s advice in the sentence I pass, in a cause which has given so great an alarm, and which is apprehended to be of such public importance?

But Paul, apprehensive of the attempt which might be made upon his life in his journey, or in the city itself, said, I am standing at Caesar’s tribunal, where as a Roman citizen I ought to be judged; and I insist upon my privilege of having my cause decided there; I have done no wrong to the Jews, as thou, O Festus, knowest perfectly well, and must have perceived clearly by what has this day been examined before thee. For if indeed I have done wrong to any, or have committed any thing worthy of death, I pretend not that there is any thing sacred in my character as to exempt me from human jurisdiction; and in that case I refuse not to die, nor do I expect or desire any favour; but what I insist

\[hI\text{ am standing at Caesar’s tribunal.}\] Gratuus and other writers have abundantly proved, that the tribunal of the Roman procurators in the provinces, as it was held in Caesar’s name, and by commission from him, was looked upon as Caesar’s tribunal.
Festus determines to send Paul to Cæsar.

Festus appeal p. due and Then tnvwe IMROVE-

12 Then Festus having spoken for a while in private with the chief persons of the Roman army and state about him, who constituted a kind of council, called in the prisoner again, and answered him, Hast thou appealed unto Cæsar? unto Cæsar thou shalt go: For how desirous sooner I am to oblige the people of my province, I will never allow myself, upon any occasion, to violate the privileges of a Roman citizen: I will therefore give proper orders as soon as possible for conveying thee to Rome, that thou mayest there be presented before the emperor himself.

In the mean time, Paul was remanded to his confinement, and his accusers returned to Jerusalem a second time, with the mortification of not having been able to accomplish their purpose against him.

I No man can give me up to them, merely to gratify, &c.] The paraphrase expresses the force of ἐλέγχειν ἐναντίον ἐμοῦ ταύτα, which I knew not how to do by any one English phrase. This, as Dr. Lardner observes, will by no means prove, that the Jews had the power of life and death in their hands; (Credid. Book I. chap. 2. § 10, Vol. I. p. 141, 142;) for Paul might reasonably apprehend, not only that he might be murdered by the way, (as he probably would have been,) but that, had the Sanhedrim condemned him, Festus might for political reasons have acted the part that Pilate did with respect to our Lord, in permitting and warranting the execution, though in his own conscience convinced of his innocence, and even declaring that conviction. See Mat. xxvii. 24, 26.

k I appeal unto Cæsar.] It is well known, that the Roman law allowed such an appeal to every citizen, before sentence was passed, and made it highly penal for any governor, after that, to proceed to any extremities against the person making it. See Dr. Benson’s Hist. Vol. II. p. 237, and Mr. Bisce at Boyle’s Let. chap ix. § 9, p. 358.

1 Constituted a kind of council.] Dr. Lardner has abundantly shown, by apposite testimonies from Josephus, Philo and Dio, that it was customary for a considerable number of persons of some distinction to attend the Roman prefects into the provinces, with whom they were used to advise, especially in matters of justice. (Credid. Book I. chap. 2. § 16, Vol. I. p. 235—237.) See also Mr. Bisc; (as above,) p. 359.

m We
IMPROVEMENT.

In the conduct of Paul towards Felix, we see the character of a gospel-minister illustrated in a most amiable manner: What could argue greater magnanimity, than to deal thus plainly with a man in whose power his liberty was? Yet he did not soothe and flatter him, but acted the part of one infinitely more concerned about the salvation of his hearers than his own temporal interest. He chooses faithfully to represent the evil of those vices to which Felix was especially addicted, and displays the terrors of the judgment to come, as enforcing the sacred laws of righteousness and temperance, which Felix had presumed so notoriously to violate.

Let the haughtiest sinners know, even upon their tribunals, and upon their thrones, that the universal Judge, and the universal King, will shew his superior power, and will ere long call them to his bar; and, if they are conscious of allowed disobedience and rebellion against that supreme Lord of all, let them, like Felix, tremble.

Great is the force of truth, and of conscience, in which the prisoner triumphs, while the judge trembles. And O! how happily might this consternation have ended, had he pursued the views which were then opening on his mind! But, like many thousands of awakened sinners in our day, he deferred the consideration of these important things to an uncertain hereafter. He talked of a more convenient season for reviewing them; a season, which, alas, never came! for, though he heard again, he trembled no more, that we can find, or if he did, it was a vain terror, while he went on in that injustice which had given him such dreadful apprehensions, of which his leaving Paul bound was a flagrant instance.

Let every reader seriously weigh this remarkable, but terrible case, and take heed of stilling present convictions, lest they only serve to increase the weight of guilt, and to render the soul for ever more sensible of that greater condemnation to which it will be exposed by wickedly overbearing them.

In the mean time, we do not find that Drusilla, though a Jewess, was thus alarmed: She had been used to hear of a future judgment; perhaps too she trusted to her being a daughter of Abraham, or to the expiatory of the law, which were never intended to answer such purposes; and so, notwithstanding the natural tenderness of her sex, was proof against those terrors which seized so strongly on her husband, though a heathen. Let it teach us to guard

We do not find, that Drusilla, &c.] For this excellent remark I am indebted to Bishop Atterbury in his unequalled sermon on this subject.

*King
guard against those false dependencies which tend to elude convictions, that might otherwise be produced by the faithful preaching of the word of God. Let it teach us to stop our ears against those syren songs which would lull us into eternal ruin, even though they should come from the mouth of those who appear like angels of light; for the prince of darkness himself could preach no more pernicious doctrines than those which reconcile the hopes of salvation with a corrupt heart and an immoral life.

In the conduct of Festus, as well as of Felix, we see what dangerous snares power and grandeur may prove, to a man who is not influenced by resolute and courageous virtue: The liberty of the worthiest of mankind was sacrificed by both, to their political views of ingratiating themselves with the Jewish people. Happy that ruler, who approving the equity of his administration to every man’s conscience, has no need to court popular favour by mean compliances; and whom the greatest cagnerness of men’s unjust demands can never turn aside from that steady tenor of justice which a righteous God requires, and which will engage that protection and favour in which alone the most exalted creatures can be happy, in which alone they can be safe.

SECT. LV.

Agrippa and Bernice coming to visit Festus, Paul is at their request brought forth to be examined before them, in a large assembly of persons of considerable rank and figure. Acts XXV. 13, to the end.

ACTS XXV. 13.

Thus Paul continued in confinement, by the order of Festus the governor, till an opportunity could be found of sending him to Rome, that he might there be tried by Caesar. And when some days were passed after his appeal, King Agrippa, the son of Herod Agrippa, who had considerable territories in that neighbourhood, and

\[\text{Agrippa and Bernice pay a visit to Festus.}\]

\[\text{sect. lv.}\]

\[\text{Acts XXV. 31.}\]

\[\text{And after certain days, King Agrippa and Bernice came unto}\]

\[\text{Acts XXV. 13.}\]

\[\text{THUS Paul continued in confinement, by the order of Festus the governor, till an opportunity could be found of sending him to Rome, that he might there be tried by Caesar. And when some days were passed after his appeal, King Agrippa, the son of Herod Agrippa, who had considerable territories in that neighbourhood, and}\]

\[\text{a King Agrippa.} \]

\[\text{The prince here mentioned was the son of Herod Agrippa spoken of before, chap. xiii. I, (see note on that text, p. 77,) and grandson of Aristobulus the son of Herod the Great. As he was but seventeen years of age when his father died, the emperor Claudius did not think proper to appoint him king of Judea in the room of his father, but made it a Roman province; however, on the death of his uncle Herod, he made him king of Chalcis, which, after he had governed it four years, he exchanged for a greater kingdom, and gave him the tetrarchies of Philip and Lysanius, to which Nero afterwards added part of Galilee, with several towns in Peræa. Josephus speaks largely of him in a multitude of passages, the most material of which are collected by Dr. Lardner, (Credib. Book I. chap. 1, § 9, Vol. I. p. 46—50,) and Mr. Biscoe, (Boyle’s Lect. chap. li. § 3, p. 48, 50.)}\]

\[\text{b And}\]
Cæsarea to salute Festus.

14 And when they had been there many days, Festus declared Paul’s cause unto the king, saying, There is a certain man left in bonds by Felix:

15 About whom, when I was at Jerusalem, the chief priests and the elders of the Jews informed me, desiring to have judgment against him.

16 To whom I answered, It is not the manner of the Romans to deliver any man to die, before that he which is accused, have the accusers face to face, and have licence to answer for himself concerning the crime laid against him.

17 Therefore when they were come hither, without any delay, on the morrow I sat on the judgment-seat, and I commanded the man to be brought forth.

And Bernice his sister, with whom he was suspected of living in an incestuous commerce, came to Cæsarea to pay their respects to Festus, and to congratulate him on his arrival in the province.

And as they continued there many days, Festus, among other subjects of discourse which occurred, laid before the king the business of Paul; saying, There is a certain man, whose name is Paul left here in bonds by Felix, who has occasioned a great deal of speculation in these parts, and indeed involved me in some difficulties: Concerning whom, when I was at Jerusalem, the chief priests and the elders of the Jews were very earnest in their applications to me, and informed [me] of him as a notorious criminal; desiring judgment against him for several facts which they laid to his charge, and pretended to be highly illegal. To whom I answered, that it is not the custom of the Romans when a crime is charged upon a person, to give up any man to destruction (which I plainly perceived they intended to bring on this Paul) till he that is accused have the accusers openly produced, to give their evidence against him face to face, and he have also liberty to speak, and be allowed an opportunity of making his defence as to the crime laid to his charge; which has so evident a foundation in reason and equity, that one would imagine it should be the common law and custom of all mankind. When therefore upon this they attended me from Jerusalem, and were come with me hither to prosecute him here, I without any delay sat down upon the tribunal, the very next day after my arrival, and commanded the man to be

b And Bernice his sister, &c.] Of this incestuous commerce Juvenal speaks in a celebrated passage, (Sat. vi. ver. 155, & seq.) as well as Josephus in the passage cited below. It is certain, this lady had first been married to her own uncle, Herod king of Chalæis, after whose death, on the report of her scandalous familiarity with her brother Agrippa, she married Polemon king of Cilicia, whom she soon forsook, though he had submitted to circumcision to obtain the alliance. (Joseph. Antiq. lib. xx. cap. 7, [al. 5.] § 5.) This was also the person, whom Titus Vespasian so passionately loved, and whom he would have made empress, had not the elusions of the Romans prevented it.

c Have the accusers face to face.] That, according to the Roman law, accusations were not to be heard in the absence of the accused person, Dr. Lardner has shewn Credib. Book I. chap. 10, § 1, Vol. I. p. 515, 516.—It evidently appears from hence, (as Beza well argues,) that the judgment they demanded against Paul (ver. 15,) was not a trial, but a sentence upon a previous conviction, which they falsely and wickedly pretended; and probably, it was the knowledge, which Festus had of Paul’s being a Roman citizen, that engaged him to determine to try the cause himself.
At Agrippa's request Paul is produced that he might hear him.

Against whom, when the accusers stood up, and offered what they had to say, they brought no charge of such things as I supposed they would have done, from the general clamour they had made against him, as a seditious and dangerous person: But instead of this, they had certain matters of debate, or questions of a different nature, which they urged against him with great vehemence, relating to some niceties of their own religion; and particularly about one Jesus of Nazareth that was dead, whom Paul unaccountably affirmed to be alive; though at the same time he acknowledged that he had been crucified at Jerusalem, and expired on the cross. Of this he pretended to produce some extraordinary, and to me utterly incredible proofs: But as I was still dubious of the question relating to him, how far it might affect the state of the Jews in general, I said to Paul, that if he were willing, he should go to Jerusalem, and there be judged of these things before me; where I thought I might have an opportunity of hearing the cause, and of examining into several particulars with greater advantage.

But Paul, apprehensive (as I plainly perceived) of some clandestine attempt upon his life, was so averse to this, that he immediately prevented any further thought of trying him at Jerusalem, by pleading his privilege as a Roman citizen, and appealing to be kept under the hearing of [our] August emperor himself; upon which I commanded him to be kept under confinement as before, till I could send him to Cæsar by some convenient opportunity.

Then Agrippa said unto Festus, I know this affair has made a great deal of noise in the world, and therefore shall be glad of an opportunity of gratifying my curiosity with a more particular and

\* Relating to their own religion.] As Agrippa was a Jew, and now come to pay a visit of respect to Festus on his arrival at his province, it is improbable, (whatever Beza insinuates to the contrary,) that he would use so rude a word as superstition, so that this text affords a further argument, that the word \textit{ecclesia} will admit a milder interpretation, like that given above in the version of Acts xvii. 22. (See note i on that text, p. 166.) And it is very remarkable, not only that the Jewish religion is spoken of by this word insensible edicts (reported by Josephus, that were made in its favour, (Antiq. lib. xiv. cap. 10. [al. 17.] § 13, 14, 16, 18, 19; but that Josephus himself uses it in the same sense too; Bell. Jud. lib. ii. cap. 9, [al. 8.] § 3;) where he has the phrase \textit{de ecclesiis} \textit{ac pacis}, to signify their invincible attachment to their religion. See Elsner, Observ. Vol. I. p. 476, 477.

\* Our August emperor.] Since Augustus was not properly one of the names of Nero, (as it was of Titus,) I thought the import of \textit{de ecclesiis} here, which was plainly a complimentary form of speaking, might be most justly expressed by this version.

f I also
Festus opens the cause before a large assembly.

also hear the man myself. To-morrow, said he, thou shalt hear him.

23 And on the morrow, when Agrippa was come, and Bernice, with great pomp, and was entered into the place of hearing, with the chief captains, and principal men of the city, at Festus's commandment Paul was brought forth.

24 And Festus said, King Agrippa, and all men which are here present with us, ye see this man, about whom all the multitude of the Jews have dealt with me, both at Jerusalem, and also here, crying, that he ought not to live any longer.

25 But when I found that he had committed nothing worthy of death, and that he himself had appealed to Augustus, I have determined to send him.

26 Of whom I have no certain thing to write unto my Lord. Wherefore I have brought him and authentic account of it: so that I also would desire to hear the man myself; that I may learn from his own mouth what it is that he maintains, and on what principles he proceeds. And Festus who was willing to oblige the king in this respect as soon as possible, promised that he would order Paul to be produced, and said, To-morrow thou shalt hear him, as largely as thou pleasest.

The next day therefore, king Agrippa and his sister Bernice coming with great pomp and splendor, and entering into the place of audience, with the tribunes and other officers of the Roman army, and likewise with the principal men of note and eminence in the city of Cesarea, at the command of Festus the governor, Paul was brought forth.

And Festus opened the occasion of their meeting with a short speech, and said, O king Agrippa, and all ye who are present with us in this numerous and splendid assembly, ye see this man, Paul of Tarsus, concerning whom all the multitude of the Jews have pleaded with me, both at Jerusalem and here, crying out with the greatest earnestness, that he was a man of the most infamous and mischievous character, and ought not to be suffered to live upon earth any longer. But for my own part, after the most diligent and impartial enquiry, I could not apprehend him to have done any thing worthy of death, or find that he was guilty of a breach of any of our laws; yet when I would have seen whether the Jews had any evidence at home to have supported any material charge against him, as he himself declined that trial to which I would have brought him at Jerusalem, and has appealed to the judgment of [our] August emperor, I have determined to send him to Rome to be heard by him. But the account I have received of him is so confused and inconsistent, that he is one concerning whom I have nothing certain to write to his imperial majesty: Wherefore I have this day brought

1 I also would desire to hear the man myself.] No doubt but Agrippa had learnt from his father, by whom it is to be remembered, James had been put to death, and Peter imprisoned, (Acts xii. 2, 3,) and from many others, something of the history and pretensions of Christianity; so that he would naturally have a curiosity to see and discourse with so eminent a Christian as Paul was; who, on account of what he had been in his unconverted state, was to be sure more regarded and talked of among the Jews, than any other of the apostles.

5 To his imperial Majesty.] To whom plainly signifies, To the great Lord of the empire, a title, by which it is well known the emperor was now often spoken of.
Reflections on the conduct of Festus and Agrippa.

brought him out before you all, and especially before thee, O king Agrippa, who art well acquainted with the Jewish customs, that after farther examination taken, I may have something more intelligible and more considerable to write, and may know better how to represent his cause. For it seems to me very absurd, as I doubt not but it will also appear to you, to send a prisoner to be tried before Caesar, and not to signify also at the same time what are the crimes or causes of complaint [alleged] against him, on which the emperor may proceed in giving judgment on his case.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. Mysterious as that dispensation was which permitted Paul's labours to be interrupted by so long an imprisonment, it is nevertheless very pleasant to trace the manner in which all was graciously over-ruled by a wise and kind providence. On this occasion he had an opportunity of hearing his testimony, first before rulers and kings in Judea, and then in Rome, and in the palace of Caesar.

None of the jewels which these princes might possess, were of any value at all, when compared with the advantage which their converse with Paul gave them, for learning the way of salvation: But how shamefully was the advantage neglected, even the price which was put into their hands to get this divine wisdom, (Prov. xvii. 16;) how coldly do they speak of the most important matters, even those relating to the death and resurrection of him, by whose knowledge and grace alone hell was to be avoided and heaven secured! There was a question about one Jesus, who was dead, whom Paul affirmed to be alive: A doubtful question! But, O Festus, why was it doubtful to thee? Surely, because thou didst not think it worth thy while seriously to search into the evidence that attended it; else that evidence had opened upon thee till it had grown into full conviction, and this thine illustrious prisoner had led thee into the glorious liberty of God's children; had led thee to a throne far brighter than that of Caesar, far more stable than the foundations of the earth.

It is no wonder that Agrippa had a curiosity to hear Paul; it is no wonder that the gospel story in general should move curiosity; but God forbid that it should be considered merely as an amusement: In that view it is an amusement that will cost men dear. In the mean time the prudence of Festus is to be commended, who was desirous to get further information in an affair of such a nature.
Paul makes his defence before Agrippa.

nature as this; and his equity, which bore a testimony to the
innocence of the apostle, is worthy of applause; as well as the law,
which provided, that none should be condemned unheard; a law
which, as it is common to all nations, (courts of Inquisition only
excepted,) ought to be the rule of our proceeding in all affairs,
not only in public but private life; if we would avoid acting an
injurious part in the censures we pass on the character of others,
and exposing our own to the just reproach, which they seldom
escape who take upon them to judge a matter before they have
heard it. (Prov. xviii. 13.)

SECT. LVI.

Paul makes his defence before Agrippa, Festus, and the rest of the
audience, in a manner which leads them to conclude he might
have been set at liberty had he not appealed to Caesar. Acts
XXVI. 1, to the end.

Acts XXVI. 1.

THEN Agrippa said unto Paul, Thou art permitted to speak
for thyself.

— Then Paul stretched forth the hand, and answered for
himself.

2 I think myself happy, king Agrippa, because I shall answer
for myself this day before thee, touching all the things whereof
I am accused of the Jews:

3 Especially, because I know thee to be expert in all cus-
toms and questions, which

a Stretching forth his hand.] Else,
(Obser. Vol. I. p. 478, 479,) shews this
to have been esteemed at that time a very
decent expression of an earnestness in one
that spoke in public, though some of the
most illustrious Greek orators in earlier
ages, such as Pericles, Themistocles, and
Aristides, thought it a point of modesty to
avoid it. But this was the effect of a
false taste; and it is plain the eloquent
Demosthenes, often used the same ges-
ture with St. Paul here.

b Especially as thou art acquainted with all
the customs, &c.] Some manuscripts have
added here слова or сочi, &c., which our
translators have received into their version;
but there is no necessity for this addition,
as appears from several instances of the
like...
cause and discourse will refer: wherefore I humbly intertreat thee, that thou wilt hear me with patience and indulgence, since it is necessary for me to enlarge circumstantially upon some important particulars, which cannot be justly represented in a few words.

4 I will therefore begin with observing, that the manner of my life from my youth, which from the beginning of that age was spent among those of my own nation at Jerusalem, is well known to all the Jews there, who are acquainted with me from the first of my setting out in the world, and indeed from the very time of my entrance upon a course of liberal education under that celebrated master Gamaliel; and if they would candidly testify what they know to be true, they would join with me in assuring you, that I lived a Pharisee according to the rules observed by that which you well know to be the strictest sect of our religion, in every thing relating not only to the written law of God, but likewise to the traditions of the fathers. And now I stand in judgment in the midst of this assembly, not for any crime that I have committed, but indeed for the hope of that promise of a resurrection to eternal life and happiness by means of the Messiah, which in time past was made by God unto [our] fathers: To the accomplishment of which are among the Jews: wherefore I beseech thee to hear me patiently.

4 My manner of life from my youth which was at the first among mine own nation at Jerusalem, know all the Jews.

5 Which knew me from the beginning, (if they would testify,) that after the most strictest sect of our religion, I lived a Pharisee.

6 And now I stand, and am judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers:

7 Unto which promise like construction in the most approved Greek authors, which are produced in their remarks on this place by De Dene, and Raphelius. (Annot. ex Xen. p. 187.) It is apparent, that Agrippa must have had great advantages for an accurate acquaintance with the Jewish customs, from his education under his father Herod Agrippa, and his long abode at Jerusalem; and agreeably to this, by the permission of the emperor, he had the direction of the sacred treasure, the government of the temple, and the right of nominating the high-priest, as Dr. Lardner has observed and proved; Cred. Book I. chap. 1, § 9, Vol. p. 49.

c From the beginning of that age.] Probably, as Dr. Wells observes in his just criticism on these words, (Sacred Geograp. Vol. III. p. 280,) he had in his childhood been brought up in the schools of Tarsus, and there formed to an acquaintance with the politest of the Greek and Roman authors, till he entered on a kind of academical course under the celebrated Gamaliel about the 15th or 16th year of his age, when he came to Jerusalem, and was there educated from the beginning of his youth.

a The strictest sect of our religion.] So Josephus calls the sect of the Pharisees, almost in the very words which the apostle uses, Bell. Jud. lib. i. cap. 5, [al. 4.] § 6, and in a variety of other passages collected by Mr. Bisboat at Boyle's Lect. chap. iv. § 5, p. 92. And Dr. Whitby has shewn, (in his learned note on this text,) that it was in many respects stricter, both as to doctrine and life, than that of the Essenes. It appears from the gospels, that many rigorous severities were used by them. (Compare Luke xviii. 11, 12; Mat. xxiii. 5, 25, 23, 28) And Wisianus assures us, (I suppose on the authority of some rabbies,) that they used to sleep on narrow plants, that falling down from them, they might soon be awakened to prayer, and that others lay on gravel, and placed thorns among them, that they could not turn without being pricked by them. Wit. Mishem. cap. 1, § 13.

8 That promise which was made by God unto our fathers.] See the paraphrase and note on Luke xx. 37, 38, Vol. II. § 268.
of which important [promise] all the known remainders of our twelve tribes, in one part of the world or another hope to attain: and by the expectation which they have of it, are animated in all their labours and sufferings for religion, while they are worshipping continually night and day, in the stated and constant performance of their morning and evening devotions, whether in the temple, or in other places in which they present their prayers; concerning which hope, O King Agrippa, glorious and reasonable as it is, I may truly say I am now most unjustly and inconsistently accused by the Jews: For the doctrine I preach contains the fullest assurance and demonstration of a resurrection that ever was given to the world; and I am persuaded it is this that provokes those of my enemies who disbelieve it, to prosecute me with so much malice. But can there indeed be any evil in maintaining this doctrine myself, and endeavouring to convince others of it? Permit me, O my honoured auditors, to appeal to you and say, Why should it be judged an incredible thing by any of you; that God, a being of infinite perfections, and the original author of the human frame should raise the dead, and continue their existence in a future state? Will not his almighty power enable him to do it? and will not the honour of his moral attributes be hereby illustrated and vindicated? And if it be credible, is it not important enough to deserve the most attentive regard? I am confident, Sirs, you would all have thought it so, had you passed through such extraordinary scenes as occasioned a change in my views and conduct; which therefore I will plainly and fully open to this august assembly.

I once indeed thought with myself, that I ought in conscience to do many things most contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth.

Paul's speaking; and a thousand such examples occur in ancient authors, where the persons introduced must be supposed perfectly to understand the rules of decorum.
der that character; Which accordingly I did particularly in Jerusalem, where many now living were witnesses of my wild rage, and cannot but remember, how I shut up many of the saints in prisons, having received authority from the chief priests to do it; and how when [some of them] were killed, I gave my vote against them, and did all I could to animate both the rulers and the people to cut them off from the face of the earth; [Compare Acts viii. 1, 3; xxii. 19, 20.] And frequently punishing them in all the synagogues wherever I could meet with them, I compelled them, if I could possibly effect it, to blaspheme the name of Jesus Christ, which I now so highly reverence, and openly to renounce all dependance upon him: And being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even to those foreign cities to which some of them had fled, hunting out the poor refugees, and endeavouring to drive them not only out of their country but out of the world.

12 In this view as I was going to Damascus, with authority and commission from the chief priests to execute this cruel purpose against all the Christians I could find there, [comp. Acts ix. 2, & seq.] At mid-day [while I was] in the way thither, and was drawing near the end of my journey, I solemnly declare before thee, O King Agrippa, and before this assembly, as in the presence of God, I saw a great and most astonishing light from heaven exceeding the splendour of the sun, shining about me and those who travelled with me.

13 And when we are all fallen down to the earth, as if we had been struck with lightning, I very dis-

10 Which thing I also did in Jerusalem: and many of the saints did I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I gave my voice against the.

11 And I punished them oft in every synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto strange cities.

12 Whereupon as I went to Damascus, with authority and commission from the chief-priests;

13 At mid-day, O king, I saw in the way a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me, and them which journeyed with me.

14 And when we were all fallen to the earth, I heard a voice speak-

not think with the learned Witsius, that this refers to his obliging them to use that form of prayer ascribed to Gamaliel, in which the Christian religion was mentioned as heresy; and by imposing which, he supposes, it was intended to prevent Christians from joining in synagogue-worship. (Wits. Meletem. cap. 1. § 22.) But the frequent instances we have of the apostles going into the synagogues, and joining in their worship, plainly shew that prayer not to have been so anciently received. A known passage in Pliny, (lib. x. epist. 94) proves, that Heathen persecutors obliged Christians, that fell under the trial, not only to renounce Christ, but also to curse him; and I think, it appears from hence, that the Jews imposed the like test upon them.

The
He was expressly sent to preach the gospel to the Gentiles,

speaking unto me, and saying in the Hebrew tongue, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? I am hard for thee to kick against the pricks.

15 And I said, Who art thou, Lord? And he said, I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest.

16 But rise, and stand upon thy feet; for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee:

17 Delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee.

18 To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me Jesus.

1 The Gentiles to whom I now send thee.] This text entirely overthrows the scheme which Lord Barrington and Dr. Benson have taken so much pains to establish, relating to Paul's receiving his first commission to preach to the idolatrous Gentiles several years after his conversion, viz. in his second journey to Jerusalem. (See notes on Acts xxii. 17, p. 29.) To support that hypothesis, (for it is no more,) they are obliged to maintain, that these words were not spoken by Christ when he met him on the way to Damascus, but in the vision he had in the temple at the time referred to above. But, as the words make a part of the sentence, in which Christ bids him rise from the astonishment into which his appearance to him on the way to Damascus had thrown him, and as he afterwards (ver. 19, 20.) speaks of his first preaching Christ at Damascus, as the effect of these words, I think every unprejudiced person must see, that they belong to the story of his conversion: And this is as reconcileable with Peter's first opening the Christian church to the unconverted Gentiles, as the general commission which Christ gave to all the apostles before his ascension. (Mark xvi. 15; Mat. xxviii. 19.) The plain answer to the seeming objection arising from both is, that though these commissions were indeed very extensive, yet they were not at first fully understood by those that received them; and Paul, as well as the twelve, might perhaps imagine, that, if any Gentiles were converted (which, to be sure, the apostles all expected multitudes would be,) they must first be received into the Jewish church by circumcision, and then into the Christian by baptism.—Many good manuscripts and ancient versions do indeed leave out ουν now; (see Dr. Mill in loc.) but few of these read ἀπετέλεσα. I will send thee; and, if we admit the reading ἀπετέλεσα, to whom I send thee, the sense will be much the same, as if we retain that which is commonly received.
ved, to the light of divine knowledge and holiness, and from the power of Satan, to which they are now in a wretched subjection, unto the love and service of God; that so they may receive the free and full forgiveness of all their sins, be they ever so many, or ever so aggravated, and may obtain an inheritance among them which are sanctified, through that faith which is in me, which terminates in me as its great object, and consists in devoting the soul to my service, and committing it to my care as the Saviour of men.

19 From that ever memorable time, O King Agrippa, through the grace of God subduing my heart, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision, with which he was pleased thus miraculously to favour me: But I immediately engaged, with all the united powers of my soul, in the service of that divine Master, against whose interest and kingdom I had hitherto been acting in so strenuous a manner; and accordingly I openly declared, first to them at Damascus, where I was going when this vision happened, and afterwards to those at Jerusalem, and through all the country of Judea, and [then] to all the Gentiles wherever I came, in my various and wide-extended travels from one country to another, that they should repent of their sins, and turn to God, with their whole hearts, performing deeds worthy of that repentance which they profess, and without which the sincerity of it can never be approved in his sight.

21 Now let any one judge, whether for this I should be treated as a criminal worthy of death, or whether indeed I have deserved these bonds: Yet on account of these things, and for no other cause, the Jews, who have the same inveteracy against the gospel of Jesus that I once had, seized me in the temple some time ago, attempted in a tumultuous manner to have killed me with their own hands: And since I was rescued at first

and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.

19 Whereupon, O king Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision:

20 But shewed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance.

21 For these causes the Jews caught me in the temple, and went about to kill me.

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k That they may turn, &c.] This seems to be the sense of the original, εἰς μεταμόρφωσιν, which (as De Dieu observes,) may properly be rendered thus, without the need of any supplement; and this will best agree with the construction, and with the sense in which the word is generally used in other places. Compare chap. ix. 55. xi. 21. xv. 19. xxvi. 20. xxvii. 27.

[To have killed me with their own hands.] Beza justly observes, that this is the exact import of ἀκολουθήσας ἀπὸ τοῦ σταυροῦ, which was the more properly used here, as there was reason to apprehend, that Paul would have been actually pulled to pieces [ἀκολουθήσας ἀπὸ τοῦ σταυροῦ] in an assembly, as it seems, less numerous and less violent, than that which seized him in the temple. Compare chap. xxviii. 10, p. 243.
22 Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come:

23 That Christ should suffer, and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should shew light unto the people, and to the Gentiles,

24 And, as he thus spoke for himself, Festus said with a loud voice, Paul, thou art beside thyself; much learning doth make thee mad.

Having obtained help from God, &c.] This may very probably express the sense he had of the late interposition of Providence in his favour, touched upon in note g on chap. xxv. 4, p. 263.

Much study doth thee to madness.] This is the exact import of the original, ἠδυνατει σοι ἀρετήν ὑπερβαίνειν. Perhaps he might know, that Paul in his present confinement spent a great deal of time in reading; and this was the most decent turn, that could be given to such a rude charge. But nothing can be at once more invincibly and Ridiculous, (as those two properties often go together,) than the gloss which Mr. Collins gives to these words, (Grounds and Reasons, p. 172,) as if Paul's applying the Old Testament Scriptures in an allegorical sense had led Festus to make this reflection; whereas it is not certain, that Paul quoted any particular scripture in this whole discourse, much less in an allegorical interpretation; nor would it have been possible for Festus, (an entire stranger to the Jewish prophecies,) to have made any judgment as to the propriety or impropriety with which they were applied; and any person of common candour would easily see, that, if such a thing had been in question, (as indeed it was not,) the conviction of Agrippa, so well versed in Jewish affairs, could have been a much stronger argument that the prophecies were applied right, than the censure of Festus could be for the contrary.
never talk of such facts as these, or expect to be credited in such wild assertion o.

But this invidious imputation was so far from
proving Paul to any indecency, that with a
perfect command of himself he calmly and
gravely replied, I am not mad, most noble Festus;
but I utter the words of truth and soberly y j which
will bear the test of the severest examination;
and I desire nothing more than that they may
26 be brought to it. For the King himself know-
eth of these things, and is no stranger to them,
to whom also I speak with freedom, emboldened
by his permission, and assured of his candour:
For I am persuaded he has better and more fa-
vourable thoughts of what I have been saying,
as none of these things are entirely hidden from
him; for this is not [an affair] that was transact-
ed in a corner; the death of Jesus, the preach-
ing of his gospel, my rage against it, and sudden
conversion to it, were all open and notorious
facts, of the truth of which thousands had op-
portunity of being certainly and thoroughly in-
formed; and I am satisfied the king has often
27 heard of them: Nor can he be ignorant of the
correspondence of these things to the predic-
tions of the Old Testament: O King Agrippa,
believest thou the prophets? Yes, I know that
thou believest them to have been written by a
divine inspiration, and are aware of the weight
of those arguments which are derived from the
authority of their testimony.

28 Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Thou hast given
such an account of these matters, and hast de-
ivered what thou hast been saying in so natural
and so earnest a manner, that thou almost per-
suadest

\* In such wild assertions.] Besides what is hinted in the paraphrase, it would appear quite absurd to Festus, to hear Paul (as he did in the last sentence of his speech,) talk of a resurrection from the dead, accom-
plished in Jesus, as the first fruits, or pre-
tend, that a person should come from the
Jews, whom he looked upon as a barbarous
nation, who should enlighten not only his
own people, but even the Gentiles too, and,
among the rest, the polite and learned
Romans and Greeks. This, in conjunc-
tion with what Paul had said of the manner
in which this was revealed to him, would
lead such a half-thinker, as Festus, to con-
clude roundly that he was a visionary en-
thusiast.

\* I am not mad, &c.] This answer, in
this connection, appears inexpressibly beau-
tiful; and if great and good men, who
meet with rude and insolent treatment in the
defence of the gospel, (which is often the
case,) learn to behave with such moderation,
it will be a great accession of strength to the
christian cause. — Raphelius shews, (as
Beza had before observed,) that ossipson,
sobriety, is with the strictest exactness op-
posed to \textit{mens, madaret; Annul, ex. Xen.}
p. 188.

\* Thou
They agree that Paul is innocent, and ought to be discharged.

29 And Paul said, I would to God; that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, where both almost, and altogether such as I am, except these bonds.

30 And when he had thus spoken, the king rose up, and the governor, and Bernice, and they that sat with them.

31 And when they were gone aside they talked between themselves, saying, This man doth nothing worthy of death, or of bonds.

32 Then said Agrippa unto Festus, This man might have been set at liberty, if he had not appealed unto Cæsar.
take that step, he has indeed put it out of our power to discharge him, and therefore he must stand by Caesar's award; to whom it will be convenient to send him as soon as possible.

**IMPROVEMENT.**

6 Perfectly does our blessed Redeemer, in this instance, appear to have answered his promise, that when his disciples were brought before governors and kings for his sake, it should be given them in that hour what they should speak: (Mat. x. 18, 19.) For indeed it is impossible to imagine what could have been said more suitable or what more graceful, than this discourse of Paul before Agrippa; in which the seriousness and spirituality of the Christian, the boldness of the apostle and the politeness of the gentleman and the scholar, appear in a most beautiful contrast, or rather a most happy union.

Vc. 2 There was no appearance of flattery, in congratulating himself upon an opportunity of speaking before one skilled in the manners and in the records of the Jews; for the more they had been attended to, with the greater advantage would the cause of Christianity have appeared. There was no arrogance in his insisting upon the strictness of his former life; since those things which were once gain to him, he had long since counted loss for Christ. (Phil. iii. 7.) The excellency of the end that inspired him was proportionable to the manner in which he was impressed with it; Well may they serve God instantly day and night, who have the hope of a happy resurrection before them; nor is the hope presumptuous and vain, since it is founded on a divine promise: Why should it seem incredible with any, that he who gave life should restore it; that God should raise the dead?

9, 11 It was this expectation that supported the Christians, while Saul breathed out threatenings and slaughter against them; (Acts ix. 1,) while mad with a profane and impious rage against Jesus of Nazareth, he compelled them to blaspheme, and persecute them even to strange nation and religion. Festus would probably entertain a better opinion of him upon this account, and would give directions to the officer who attended him, to treat him with so much the greater respect. I shall only add, that though it might seem in this view an unhappy circumstance that Paul had made this appeal; yet, as it was, at the time that he made it, the properest method he could take for his own security, he would have reason to reflect upon it with satisfaction, and we before observed, that his visiting Rome under the character of a prisoner was over-ruled by Providence, to answer some important purposes. Compare Phil. vi. 12, 13. [This discourse of Paul before Agrippa.] The reply of Paul to Agrippa is so excellently illustrated in Three Discourses on Irresolution in Religion, by my much honoured friend the Rev. Dr. Samuel Clark of St. Alban's, that I cannot but earnestly recommend them to the perusal of all, who desire thoroughly to enter into the strength and spirit of this beautiful part of the sacred story.
strange cities. But a conduct like this must occasion to him the keenest remorse, when he came to know what he did, and to see how gracious and condescending a Lord he had been persecuting in his members: When he took so gracious a method to reclaim him, it is no wonder that it left an indelible impression on his memory and on his heart. Indeed the story is so pleasant, and so instructive, that we may well bear to read it a second and a third time; or rather may rejoice in it, as so many instructive circumstances are added to those which we before endeavourd to illustrate and improve. (Compare Acts ix. 2—6. and xxii. 5—16.)

What can be more affecting than the view which our Lord here gives us of the state in which the gospel found men, in comparison with that into which it was intended to bring them? A gospel-ministry was to open their eyes before blinded, to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God: that they might receive the remission of their sins, and an inheritance among them that are sanctified. Enlighten, O Lord, the dark corners of the earth: vindicate the wretched slaves of Satan into the glorious liberty of the children of God, and adopt them to that inheritance which thou hast prepared for thy sanctified ones.

Wonderful scheme of divine goodness! and happy the men who are employed in promoting it! Let the profane world call their zeal madness, and account for it in a less decent and candid manner than Festus himself did; these would be found the words of truth and sobriety, and the God of truth and of wisdom will approve them as such, when the wisdom of the world shall all appear foolishness and madness. (1 Cor. iii. 19.)

God grant that none of us may rest in being almost persuaded to be Christians; when convictions begin to open, let us follow the celestial ray whithersoever it leads us, and not be disobedient to the heavenly vision. Would to God, that all who shall read or hear this discourse, might be not only almost, but altogether prevailed upon to be Christians, and might attain to a temper like that of the blessed Paul, even though his bonds were not to be excepted! For that religious joy which such a disposition must introduce, would render chains, yet heavier than his light; and they would quickly be transformed into ornaments of glory which shall deck the soul in the presence of God, with a lustre infinitely superior to that which the diadem of Agrippa, or the robe of Festus, could.
SECT. LVII.

Paul sets out on his voyage from Cæsarea to Rome, and having suffered great extremity in a storm, receives assurances of his preservation by a vision, which he communicates to his companions for their encouragement. Acts XXVII. 1—26.

Acts XXVII. 1. And when it was determined that we should sail into Italy, they delivered Paul, and certain other prisoners, unto one named Julius, a centurion of Augustus’ band.

2 And entering into a ship of Adramyttium; we launched, meaning to sail by the coasts of Asia; one Aristarchus a Macedonian, of Thessalonica, being with us.

3 And the next day we touched at Sidon; And Julius courteously entreated Paul, and gave

Aristarchus, a Macedonian, &c. This good man, by birth a Thessalonian, had been with Paul in Ephesus at the time of the tumult there, (chap. xix. 29,) where he had been seized by the mob, and exposed to great hazard. He afterwards attended him to Macedonia, and returned with him to Asia. (Chap. xx. 4.) He now accompanied him to Rome, and was a fellow-prisoner with him there; (Col. iv. 10.) and is mentioned in Paul’s epistle to Philemon, (ver. 24,) who was probably their common friend, as a valuable assistant in his ministerial work. It was to be sure a great comfort to the apostle, to have the company of two such friends as Luke and Aristarchus, as it was also a great instance of their affection to him, that they would follow him, when he was going as a prisoner to Rome, not being ashamed of his bonds, and especially, that they would attend him at a time, when they knew sailing to be dangerous. Compare ver. 9.

[As it was determined that we should sail.] Some ancient copies and versions read it, that [he should sail, which may seem more proper, as those that sent away Paul had no power over Luke or Aristarchus; yet they also determined, though freely, to sail.

b They delivered Paul and some other prisoners.] Dr. Lardner proves at large, particularly from several passages of Josephus, that prisoners of importance used frequently to be sent, as from other provinces, so from Judea, to Rome; Cre- dol, Book 1, chap. 10, § 10, Vol. I. p. 531, 532.

c Aristarchus, a Macedonian, &c.] This good man, by birth a Thessalonian, had been with Paul in Ephesus at the time of the tumult there, (chap. xix. 29,) where he had been seized by the mob, and expressed to great hazard. He afterwards attended him to Macedonia, and returned with him to Asia. (Chap. xx. 4.) He now accompanied him to Rome, and was a fellow-prisoner with him there; (Col. iv. 10.) and is mentioned in Paul’s epistle to Philemon, (ver. 24,) who was probably their common friend, as a valuable assistant in his ministerial work. It was to be sure a great comfort to the apostle, to have the company of two such friends as Luke and Aristarchus, as it was also a great instance of their affection to him, that they would follow him, when he was going as a prisoner to Rome, not being ashamed of his bonds, and especially, that they would attend him at a time, when they knew sailing to be dangerous. Compare ver. 9.
They meet with contrary winds, and put into Crete.

4 And when we had launched from thence, we sailed under the island of Cyprus, leaving it on the left hand, because the winds were contrary.

5 And when we had sailed over the sea of Ciliica and Pamphylia, we came to Myra a city of Lycia.

6 And there the centurion found a ship of Alexandria sailing into Italy; and he put us therein.

7 And when we had sailed slowly for several days by Rhodes and several other small islands which lay near the Carian shore, and were hardly got over-against the point of Cnidus, a celebrated port of Caria, the wind not permitting us to make greater dispatch, we steered to the south, and sailed under Crete, over-against the promontory of Salmine, on the eastern coast of that island: And passing it with difficulty, when we had made the cape, we came to a certain place called The Fair Havens, the most considerable port in that part of Crete, in the neighbourhood of which was the city of Lasca. And as much time was spent in making of this little way, and the season of the year was so far

that of Beza, who takes Salmine to have been the promontory Salomium, which he places in the western coast, a situation that no way agrees with the rest of the description, nor with the authority of Dionysius, Perig. ver. 110. But this is not a place to adjust geographical controversies; otherwise I think it would be easy to shew, that this excellent critic has given, in many respects, a very wrong account of this voyage.
Paul warns them of their danger, but they will not lie by.

far advanced, that sailing was now hazardous, because the fast of expiation was already over, and consequently winter was coming on apace; Paul spake to those who had the chief direction of the voyage, and prudently exhorted them not to put out to sea; Saying unto them, Sirs, I perceive, that if this voyage be pursued according to the present scheme you have in view, it will be attended with much injury and great damage not only to the lading that we have on board and to the ship itself, but also in all human probability to our lives; and therefore I should think it highly conducive to our common safety, rather to winter here than to attempt to proceed any farther.

11 But Julius the centurion, in whose breast the determination of the affair lay, paid greater regard in this instance to the opinion of the pilot and the master of the vessel, than to those things which were spoken by Paul; imagining, notwithstanding the esteem he had for him in other views, that these were more competent judges in the business of navigation. And as the haven, notwithstanding its agreeable name, was not commodious to winter in, the greater part of the company advised to set sail from thence, if they might possibly reach to Phœnicia to winter there; [which is] a kind of double haven on the southern coast of Crete, looking to the south-west and north-west, where in consequence of a jutting point of land which defended it, they hoped on getting into the upper part of it, to lie secure from almost any wind that could blow.

12 And as the weather came to be more favourable, and the south wind blew gently, which would prevent their driving out to sea, supposing they were now secure of their purpose, and by the help of the side-wind might coast along the island, they weighed anchor from the Fair Havens, and sailed on close to the shore of Crete.

13 But not long after they had put to sea, the ship was in great danger, as on a sudden there arose against it time was spent, and when sailing was now dangerous, because the fast was now already past, Paul admonished them.

10 And said unto them, Sirs, I perceive that this voyage will be with hurt and much damage, not only of the lading and ship, but also of our lives.

11 Nevertheless the centurion believed the master and the owner of the ship, more than those things which were spoken by Paul.

12 And because the haven was not commodious to winter in, the more part advised to depart thence also; if by any means they might attain to Phœnicia, and thence to winter; which is an haven of Crete, and lieth toward the south-west, and north-west.

13 And when the south wind blew softly, supposing that they had obtained their purpose, loosing thence, they sailed close by Crete.

14 But not long after there arose against it would naturally be so, not only on account of winter approaching, but also because of the Michaelmas fogs that are still well known in the Mediterranean. See Raphel. Not. ex Irrol. p. 397, and Veget. de Rle militari lib. iv. cap. 59.

1 Close to Crete. That is to be taken as an advirt, and not as the name of a place, Beza has so fully demonstrated that nothing need to be said in proof of it here.
Having put to sea again, a violent storm arises.

it a tempestuous wind, called Euroclydon.

15 And when the ship was caught, and could not bear up into the wind, we let her drive.

16 And running under a certain island, which is called Claudia, we had much work to come by the boat:

17 Which when they had taken up, they used helps, undergirding the ship; and fearing lest they should fall into the quicksands, strike sail, and so were driven.

1 And we being exceedingly tossed with the tempest, the next

**A tempestuous wind, which is called Euroclydon.** The learned Dr. Bentley (in his *Remarks on Freethinking*, Part II. § 59, 70.) has taken a great deal of pains to establish the reading of the *Alexandrian Manuscript*, admitted also by Grotius and Cluverius.) *Seil. Antq. lib. ii. p. 442,* which is *vortexius*, agreeable to the vulgar *Tuaquaio,* the north-west wind, which was indeed proper to carry the ship from Crete to the African shore, and so might expose them to the danger of the Syrtis. (Ver. 17.) But I think my learned friend Mr. Brockel, in his ingenious introduction to his discourse called *Euroclydon,* has advanced such objections against that interpretation as cannot be answered, and abundantly proved, that it could not be a *polar wind,* but was rather a kind of *hurricane,* often shifting its quarter, and accordingly not bearing them forward any one way, but tossing them backward and forward in the Adriatic; (ver. 27.) which is very agreeable to the account which the learned and accurate Dr. Shaw gives of the matter in his *Travels,* p. 358—561, where he explains it as one of the furious kind of winds, now called *Levanters,* which are *eastern winds,* not confined to one single point, but blowing in all directions from the north-east to the south-east.—See also *Erasmi* on this place.

**Let they should fall upon the quicksands.** See a good collection of the descriptions given of the greater and the lesser *Syrtis,* by approved writers of antiquity, in Gualperus’s note on this verse.
lightened the ship, by heaving over board the goods that she was laden with, and throwing out the heaviest wares into the sea. And the third day the tempest was so great, that all the passengers as well as mariners were employed; and we cast out with our own hands the very tackling of the ship, which in such circumstances we should have been desirous to have preserved, preferably to the most precious wares with which she could have been laden.

Now as we knew not where the wind had driven us, for neither sun nor stars appeared for several days, and still the sea ran high, and no small tempest pressed upon us, all the little remainder of hope that we might be saved and delivered from the danger we were in, was in a manner taken away from us; and the whole company expected nothing but that the ship would certainly be lost, and we should perish with it.

And when in all this time they had no heart to think of taking any regular refreshment, so that there was a great want of food, and their distress was such that they were quite dispirited, then Paul standing in the midst of them said, Sirs, if it were proper to reflect upon what is past, and now irretrievable, I might tell you that you ought to have hearkened to me, and not to have loosed from Crete at so inconvenient a time, and so to have gained this injury and loss which you have already suffered, and be exposed to that distress which you are farther to endure. Nevertheless, even now, bad as the situation of affairs may appear, I exhort you to be of good courage; for though you are ready to conclude you

next day they lightened the ship:

And the third day we cast out with our own hands the tackling of the ship.

Now as we knew not where the wind had driven us, for neither sun nor stars appeared for several days, and still the sea ran high, and no small tempest pressed upon us, all the little remainder of hope that we might be saved and delivered from the danger we were in, was in a manner taken away from us; and the whole company expected nothing but that the ship would certainly be lost, and we should perish with it.

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But after long abstinence, Paul stood forth in the midst of them, and said, Sirs, Ye should have hearkened unto me, and not have loosed from Crete, and to have gained this harm and loss.

And now I exhort you to be of good cheer: for there shall be

1 To have gained this injury and loss. Both these words, with and διήθησαν are used ver. 10, and I doubt not, but they have here a reference to what the apostle had declared before.—The first, διήθησαι, generally signifies some kind of wrongs; and accordingly, it, and its compounds and derivatives, are almost always used in this sense. (Compare 2 Cor. xii. 10, Mat. xxii. 6, Luke xi. 45, xviii. 52, Rom. i. 30, 1 Tim. i. 13.) But it extends to every violent assault, (Acts xiv. 5, 1 Thess. ii. 2.) and is here used for that of waves and winds. I apprehend the English word injury exactly corresponds to it, and is used in the same latitude: Thus none would scruple to say, a ship had been much injured by a storm.—The other word διήθησα signifies a loss, especially a fine; compare note f on Mark viii. 36, Vol. III. p. 476. And perhaps it may be used to insinuate, that this loss was a kind of fine paid for their own imprudence. To gain a loss seems so odd a phrase, that one would think διήθησαν was here put for sustaining, unless the use of it was intended to intimate, that, in such extreme danger, they were to look upon it as a circumstance of great advantage, to escape with their lives, or (as it is elsewhere expressed with great spirit,) to have life given for a prey, (Jer. xxii. 9, xxviii. 2, xxxix. 18, xl. 5.) And it seems to me, that, in all the instances collected by Elrner here, though in another view, the word has precisely this sense and force; Elrner. Observ. Vol. I. p. 486.
be no loss of any man's life among you, but of the ship.

23 For there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve:

24 Saying, Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Cesar; and lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee.

25 Wherefore, Sirs, be of good cheer: for I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me.

26 Howbeit we must be cast upon a certain island.

you must inevitably perish, I assure you, that there shall be no loss of any single life among you, but only of the ship, which must indeed be dashed in pieces. Nor is it without good authority that I speak in so express and positive a manner, with regard to an event which seems to you at best very uncertain, or rather utterly improbable; for there appeared to me this very night an angel of the God whose servant and property I joyfully confess that I am, and whom I humbly and diligently worship, though most of you are so unhappy as to be ignorant of him: He is so great a God, that all the heavenly hosts adore him, and are ever ready to execute his commands; and one of them hath come to visit me on this occasion, saying, Fear not, Paul, for thou must be presented before the tribunal of Cesar: and, behold, God hath not only determined to rescue thee from this imminent danger, but he hath also given thee the lives of all them that sail in this vessel with thee, who shall be preserved for thy sake. Wherefore, take courage, Sirs, and lay aside your fears, for I trust in God, whose word is faithful, and his power almighty, that it shall certainly be so, according to the manner in which it hath been spoken to me. But I know also, that we must be cast upon a certain island, and that the vessel will be wrecked upon the coast of it: Nevertheless we shall, if we take care to use the proper means for that purpose, all escape, and get safe to land; and from thence shall pursue our voyage to Italy more prosperously in another vessel.

IMPROVEMENT.

We see in this renewed instance the great force of a virtuous character, and of a truly worthy and honourable behaviour, towards engaging the esteem of all around us. Julius the centurion had a reverence and affection for Paul, which, as in the beginning of this voyage it procured for him the satisfaction of conversing with his friends at Sidon, and receiving the fruit of their affection, so it was in the progress of it the occasion of saving this great apostle's life, and with it that of the rest of the prisoners, (ver. 42, 43.) Let us learn thus to soften the fierce and to convince the prejudiced, and humbly trust in that God who, if our ways please him, can turn our enemies into friends, (Prov. xvi. 7,) and can preserve and bless us, by means of those who were intended to be only the instruments of affliction.

From
17—20 waters, let us learn to pity those who being providentially engaged in a sea-faring life, are often in such deaths as these. When we hear, as it may be we do while far from the shores of our island, the stormy winds raging around us, and see the effects of their fury in those stupendous instances which sometimes appear, let us sound up, as it were upon their rapid wings, our compassionate cries to that God who holds them all in his fists, (Prov. xxx. 4.) that he would help and save those that are ready to be swallowed up quick in a watery grave, and perhaps many of them, while just on the brink of eternity, in the number of those that are of all others most unprepared for it.

22—25 Happy the man, in whatever extremities of danger, that is conscious of a relation to the God of heaven, as his God and his father; that can say, like Paul, in this blessed parenthesis, whose I am, and whom I serve! Let us, when we can use the language, take the comfort of it, and commit ourselves to the guardian care of our God with cheerfulness: He knoweth them that are his, and will take care of his own. Let our faith put a reality into all his promises, that it shall certainly be, even as he hath spoken unto us. Thus let us encourage ourselves in the Lord our God, (1 Sam. xxx. 6.) and the event shall not shame our hopes; but we shall find by happy experience, that God will not only save us from ruin, but conduct us to joy as well as to safety everlasting. Amen.

SECT. LVIII.

Paul and his companions, after having suffered further extremities in their voyage, are at length shipwrecked on the shore of Malta; but all escape with their lives. Acts XXVII. 27, to the end.

27-28 Several threatening circumstances of the violent storm, which Paul and his companions met with in their voyage, were described before; and we now proceed to observe, that when the fourteenth night was come, as we were tossed up and down in the Adriatic sea, the mariners suspected about midnight that they drew near some land: And sounding the depth of water,

a In the Adriatic sea.] It is well known to those acquainted with ancient geography, that all that part of the Mediterranean which lay south of Italy was called the Adriatic Sea, and that which is now the Gulf of Venice was the Sinus Adriaeum. See Gravis in loc. and Mr. Bacon at Boyle's Leet, ch. p. x. § 4, p. 380, 381. b Unless
and found it twenty fathoms: and when they had gone a little further, they sounded again, and found it fifteen fathoms:

29 Then, fearing lest they should have fallen upon rocks, they cast four anchors out of the stern, and wished for the day.

30 And as the shipmen were about to flee out of the ship, when they had let down the boat into the sea, under colour as though they would have cast anchors out of the foreship,

31 Paul said to the centurion, and to the soldiers, except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved.

32 Then the soldiers cut off the ropes of the boat, and let her fall off.

33 And while the day was coming on, Paul besought them all water, they found [it] twenty fathoms: and having gone a little way from thence, and sounding again, they found [it] only fifteen fathoms; which decrease of their soundings convinced them, that this apprehension was just. And therefore, fearing lest they should fall upon some rocky shore, where there might not be depth of water sufficient to keep the vessel from striking, they cast four anchors out of the stern, and heartily wished, that the day would break, and more clearly discover our situation.

But when the mariners perceived the danger so extreme, they endeavoured to flee out of the ship, and to provide for their own safety by making to the shore; and when to compass their design they had let down the boat into the sea, and were just going into it, under a pretence that they were about to carry out anchors from the ship's head, to make the vessel more secure by dropping them at a distance. Paul, who knew that it was the will of God that all proper endeavours should be used for their preservation, in a dependance on the promise he had given them, perceiving the design they had in view, said to Julius the centurion and the soldiers that were with him, Unless these mariners continue in the ship, without whose help we know not how to manage her, ye cannot be saved; for the promise made you of your lives was to be understood, as given on condition of your taking the most prudential measures to secure them, which present circumstances will admit. Then the soldiers, who had learnt from their commander to pay a deference to what Paul said, that the success of this intended fraud might be effectually prevented, cut off the cords of the boat, by which it was fastened to the side of the ship, and let it fall off into the sea before any of the mariners were got into it.

And while the day was coming on, before they had light sufficient to discern what they should do, Paul earnestly exhorted them all to take [some] food, saying, To-day you are looking for the compliance, as what he knew would be the successful means of securing it, though none can deny, but these sailors had a natural power of going out of the ship, or the soldiers a natural power of permitting them to do it. The application of this remark to other affairs of greater moment appears to me both easy and important.
the fourteenth day since you have been in this distress, and all of you continue fasting, having taken nothing of a regular meal; the necessary consequence of which is, that you must thus be very faint and weak, and unfit for those fatigues which may farther lie before you; for it will be a narrow escape that we are to expect, and we may find great difficulties in getting on shore.

As therefore till the morning rises we can attempt nothing by way of approach to land, I exhort you to improve this little interval of leisure, by making use of it to take [some] food; since it is plain that this is proper to be done for your safety, as it will make you fitter to act for your own preservation, according as future circumstances may require; and you may allow yourselves this refreshment with the greater cheerfulness, for I can renew the assurance I before gave, that whatever risque you run, and whatever labour we pass through, not a hair shall fall from the head of any of you. 

And when he had spoken thus, and had took bread, he begged a blessing on it, and gave thanks to God before them all, for that provision which he gave them in their necessities, and for the assurance of life with which he had favoured them by so particular a revelation; and having broken it, he set them an example, and he himself began to eat heartily. And being all encouraged by the cheerful and pious discourse of the apostle, they also took some food, as he had done: and on the whole, sad as their circumstances were, they made a comfortable and refreshing meal. And by the way, we had a great number of persons aboard, and were in all in the ship no less than two hundred and seventy-six souls. And after they had done their meal, being all to take meat, saying, This day is the fourteenth day that ye have tarried and continued fasting, having taken nothing.

Therefore I pray you to take some meat; for this is for your health: for there shall not a hair fall from the head of any of you.

And when he had thus spoken, he took bread, and gave thanks to God in presence of them all, and when he had broken it, he began to eat.

Then were they all of good cheer, and they also took some meat.

And we were in all in the ship, two hundred threescore and sixteen souls.

And when they had

c Continue fasting, having taken nothing.] Appian speaks of an army, which for twenty days together took neither food nor sleep; by which he must mean, they never made full meals, nor slept whole nights together. The same interpretation must be given to this phrase, which Mr. Breckell also thinks may intimate, that they were now at short allowance, as they were like to have a much longer voyage than was at first intended, and had two hundred and seventy-six souls on board. (Euroclydon, p. 26.) But Grotius declares against this last opinion, which is to be sure uncertain, though I think it might possibly be the case, and that ver. 38 is not decisive to the contrary.

d Not a hair shall fall from the head of any of you.] Some think this alludes to a custom among mariners, to make vows in times of extremity, and to shave their heads in consequence of them, and so interpret these words, as if it were said, "You need not vow your hair; you shall be safe without that expediency." (See Dryden's note on Juvenal, p. 183.) But it appears to have been a proverbial and general expression of entire safety. Compare 1 Kings i. 22; Matt. x. 20; Luke xii. 7; xxi. 18.

e When...
They discover a creek, and would have thrust the ship into it.

bad eaten enough, they lightened the ship, and cast out the wheat into the sea.

59 And when it was day, they knew not the land; but they discovered a certain creek with a shore into which they were minded, if it were possible to thrust in the ship.

40 And when they had taken up the anchors, they committed themselves into the sea, and loosed the rudder-bands, and hoisted up the main sail to the wind, and made toward shore.

41 And falling into a place where two seas met, they ran the ship aground; and the foremost stuck fast, and remained immovable, but the hinder part was broken with the violence of the waves.

42 And the soldiers counsel being satisfied with food, they once more lightened the ship, and having been told by Paul, that they should run upon some island, they threw away the very stores they had on board, and cast out the remainder of the corn into the sea.

And when it was day, they had the shore before them, but did not know the land, and still were at a loss what course to take; but they perceived a certain creek, having a level shore, convenient for landing, into which they were minded, if they were able, to have thrust the ship. And with this view, when they had weighed their anchors they committed [the ship] to the sea, and tried to stand in for the creek, at the same time loosing the rudder-bands, that they might reach the land with greater safety, and hoisting up the main sail to the winds, which seemed to set right for this purpose, they made for the shore. 41 But falling on a place which was a neck of land where two seas met, such was the violence of the current, that they ran the ship aground; and the foremost part which stuck upon the sand stuck fast, and remained immovable, while the hinder part was broken to pieces by the force of the waves.

In this critical juncture, as there were several prisoners aboard, who were to be conveyed in custody to Rome, there was a most unjust and cruel purpose formed against them, and the counsel of the soldiers was, that they should kill the

* When they had weighed the anchors, they committed the ship to the sea. Some rather choose to render this, that, having cut the anchors, they left them in the sea; and the original indeed is dubious, and will admit of either sense: ᾽Ιδείτε πως ἐμπολοῦμεν τὸν ψάραμον; αὖ γὰρ τὸν ἑλκαστήρα. See De Dieu in loc.

f Loosing the rudder-bands; ἐκλατᾶν τοῦ κέρατος; τὰ πέδαλα. Dr. Benson observes, agreeably to the judgment of Grotius, that their ships in those days had commonly two rudders, one on each side, which were fastened to the ship by bands or chains, and, on loosing these bands, the rudders sunk deeper into the sea, and by their weight rendered the ship less subject to be over-set by the winds. (Hist. Vol. II. p. 256.) But it seems rather, that the rudders had been fastened before, when they had let the vessel drive, and were now loosened, when they had need of them to steer her into the creek; and, after they had just been throwing out their corn to lighten the ship, it is not easy to suppose, they should immediately contrive a method to increase the weight of it.—That they had frequently two rudders to their ships, Bochart and Elsner have confirmed by several authorities. See Bochart Hieroz. Part II. lib. 4, cap. 1, p. 453; Elsner. Observ. Vol. I. p. 488, 489.

x Hoisting up the main sail to the wind.] So our translators render the word αὐτοκειμένος, and I, who am not accurately acquainted with the form either of ancient or of modern ships, shelter myself under their authority; but Grotius (who contends that αὐτοκειμένος, ver. 17, signifies the main mast, and consequently that the main sail was now gone, ver. 19,) supposes, it was a sail near the foremost of the ship, answering either to what we call the foremost, or to the bow-sprit; which last seems to agree best with the account, which Stephen has collected from the most considerable authorities. See his Latin Theaurus, in the word Artemon.
Reflections on their danger and deliverance.

the prisoners; lest any one should take this opportunity to swim away, and should escape out of their hands; of which they did not care to run the hazard, as they well knew how severe the Roman law was in such cases, where there was any room to suspect the guards of connivance or negligence. But the centurion, being desirous to save so worthy and considerable a person as Paul, hindered them from executing [their] purpose, and commanded those that could swim to throw themselves out first into the sea, and get away to land: And as for the remainder, some adventured themselves upon planks, with which the wreck supplied them, and others upon some of [the things] which they found means to get out of the ship, and so, through the singular care of divine Providence, it came to pass according to the prediction of Paul, that they all got safe to land, and there was not one single life lost.

Improvement.

Ver. The section we have now been reading, contains a remarkable illustration of the obligations we are under to use the most proper means for security and success, even while we are committing ourselves to the care of divine Providence, and waiting the accomplishment of God’s own promises; For it would be most unreasonable to imagine, that he ever intended any promise to encourage rational creatures to act in a wild and irrational manner; or to remain inactive, when he has given them natural capacities of doing something at least for their own benefit. It is in exerting these that we are to expect his powerful aid; and all the grace, beauty, and wisdom of the promise would be lost, if we were to take it in any other view: To abuse it in a contrary view, is at best vain and dangerous presumption, if all pretence of relying upon it be not profane hypocrisy.

18, 19 How solicitous are men in danger for the preservation of this mortal and perishing life! They cast out their goods in a storm; they throw away the tackling of the ship to lighten it; and for many succeeding days forget even to eat their bread: O when shall we see a solicitude any thing like this about the concerns of their

*Being desirous to save Paul.] Thus God, for Paul’s sake, not only saved all the rest of the ship’s company from being lost in the sea, but kept the prisoners from being murdered, according to the unjust and barbarous proposal of the soldiers, who could have thought of no worse a scheme, had they been all condemned malefactors, and had these guards, instead of conveying them to their trial, been carrying them to the place of execution.
their never-dying souls! Alas, amidst the extremest danger, they are rather like those, who in such a storm as this, should have been sleeping on the top of a mast. (Prov. xxiii. 34.) Let us not wonder if, when awakened on a sudden, and made to see and to feel the extremity of their case, they are for awhile taken off from attending as usual to their secular affairs; nor rashly censure that as madness, which may be the first entrance of true wisdom into their minds.

We see how cheerful Paul was amidst the rage of winds and waves, under a sense of the faithful care of his God; and how the assurance which he gave to the rest, that their lives should be preserved, though their possessions in the ship were all lost, animated them to eat their bread with cheerfulness. With how much greater cheerfulness may they sustain all temporal losses, and relish in the midst of them all the remaining bounties of Providence, (as some always remain,) whose eternal life is secured by the word of God, and the engagement of a covenant which he has confirmed by an oath?

To conclude, It was to Paul that the lives of those that sailed with him were given; and his fellow prisoners owed to him a double preservation, first from the sword and then from the sea. Thus may a relation to God's faithful servants, and a community of interests with them, be the means of great temporal advantage even to those that are strangers to the covenant of promise. Surely after so many remarkable circumstances, pointing out the apostle to the company of this ship as a teacher commissioned by God, and favoured with extraordinary intercourses with him, they must be very inexcusable if they did not henceforward commence his attentive hearers and humble disciples. Those of them who did so, would find their deliverance from the fury of the sea but an earnest of another deliverance infinitely greater and better; and are long ere this lodged with him on a far more hospitable shore, and in a more peaceful harbour, than Malta, or than earth could afford.

SECT. LIX.

Paul and his companions are hospitably entertained at Malta: he miraculously escapes the fatal effects of a viper's bite, cures Publius's father of a fever; and then pursues his voyage to Rome. Acts XXVIII. 1—16.

Acts XXVIII. 1.

And when they were escaped, then they knew

Acts XXVIII. 1.

The apostle Paul and all the rest of the ship's company having escaped the danger of the shipwreck, and being thus got safe [to land]
A viper fastens upon Paul, and he receives no harm.

they had no sooner reached the shore but some of the inhabitants came to them, and they then knew that the island on which they were cast was called Melita, or Malta: And the barbarians of that place, (as the Romans, though in many respects more barbarous themselves, proudly accounted those who were its native inhabitants,) treated us with an uncommon degree of humanity; for having kindled a fire, they brought us all to it because of the present rain, which had followed the storm, and because of the cold, with which we were almost ready to perish.

Now as Paul was gathering up a bundle of sticks, and laying them upon the fire, a viper which had lain concealed among the wood coming out of the heat, upon feeling the warmth of the fire, fastened upon his hand and bit it. And as soon as the barbarians saw the fierce animal hanging on his hand, as they perceived he was a prisoner, and had some notion of a divine Providence and its moral government, they said one to another, This man is certainly a murderer, or some other detestable criminal, whom the divine vengeance hath not permitted to live, though he be saved from the danger of the sea. But knew that the island was called Melita.

2 And the barbarous people shewed us no little kindness, for they kindled a fire, and received us every one, because of the present rain, and because of the cold.

3 And when Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks, and laid them on the fire, there came a viper out of the heat, and fastened on his hand.

4 And when the Barbarians saw the venomous beast hang on his hand, they said among themselves, No doubt this man is a murderer, whom though he hath escaped the sea, yet vengeance suffered not to live.

3 Melita, or Malta. It is well known that this small island (about twelve miles broad and twenty long, and sixty distant from Sicily to the south,) took its name from the abundance of honey found in it; it also yields a great deal of cotton, and, though it was but three feet depth of earth above the solid rock, is very fruitful. Paul's shipwreck here engaged a kind of superstitious regard to it, in consequence of which it was given A. D. 1530, by the emperor Charles V. to the knights of St. John of Jerusalem, when they had been expelled from Rhodes by the Turks; they are a thousand in number, of whom five hundred always reside, and are called Hospitallers.

6 The barbarians treated us with uncommon humanity.] The Greeks and Romans reckoned all other nations but their own Barbarians, as differing from them in their customs or language; and all mankind are therefore comprehended by the apostle Paul under the distinction of Greeks and Barbarians, Rom. i. 14. This island, which had several commodious havens, was peopled by a colony of the Phoenicians, and the inhabitants were noted for their civility to strangers. See Dioscor. Sic. lib. v. p. 204. Edit. Steph.

4 This man is certainly a murderer.] Elsner says, (Obser. Vol. i. p. 489—491,) they concluded he was a murderer, rather than guilty of any other crime, because they saw the viper hanging on his hand, which therefore they judged to have been the offending part, according to the rule which (as he shows by many curious and entertaining instances) prevailed much among the ancients, that persons were often remarkably punished in that part of the body, which had been the immediate instrument of their sin.—Beza justly observes, that ex nucus should be rendered, according to its exact form, hath not permitted, to signify that they looked upon him as in effect a dead man, after having been bit by that venomous creature.

6 The fierce animal. This is the proper import of the word ἄρπαξ here used. Bos has well shewn, (Exercit. p. 90, 91,) that the physicians use it to express any poisonous animal, and Lucian in particular applies it, as here, to a viper; (Philos. loc. cit. ii. p. 333, Ed. Gerh.) but to render it beast is by no means justifiable. See Bochart, Hieroz. Part II. lib. c., cap. 2.

4 Seeing
5 And he shook off the beast into the fire, and felt no harm.

6 Howbeit they looked when he should have swollen, or fallen down dead suddenly: but after they had looked a great while, and saw no harm come to him, they changed their minds, and said that he was a god.

But as the miraculous power of Christ instantly interposed to heal him, (compare Mark xvi. 18, Luke x. 19,) he without any manner of confusion shaking off the fierce animal into the fire, suffered no evil, and took no farther notice of what had happened. However they expected, according to what they had known to be usual in such cases, that the venom would soon operate, in such a manner that he should either have swollen, or suddenly have fallen down dead upon the spot: And having waited a considerable time to observe the effect of it upon him, and seeing no mischief at all befall him, instead of taking him to be a murderer, changing their minds they said, that he was surely some deity, descended in a human form; as nothing less than the power of a god could ward off so extreme a danger.

And in the neighbourhood of that place where our shipwrecked company had met with so kind a welcome, there was the estate of the chief magistrate or governor of the island, whose name was Publius; who with a generous and friendly disposition having received us into his house, entertained us there in a very courteous and hospitable manner for three days together. And so it was, that at this very time the father of Publius was dangerously ill, being seized with a fever and bloody flux, by which he was confined to his bed; to whom Paul going in, made him a visit in the apartment where he lay, and having prayed for his recovery, laid his hands on him, and healed him.

Now therefore when this [miracle] was wrought on a person so well known, and of so great importance, the news of it soon spread abroad; and as

* Seeing no mischief befall him.] Elsner observes, that many of the heathens thought, there was something divine in the nature of serpents, and that deities, or good genii, who were made use of as the instruments of delivering and honouring those that were the peculiar favourites of the gods, often appeared in that shape. (Evn. Obscr. Vol. I. p. 492, 493.) Hence idols were often made with serpents near them; and there have been numerous, and indeed astonishing instances of religious worship paid to that kind of animal, absurd as it may seem. See Revolat. exam. with Candour, Vol. I. p. 80, 81. Dr. Jenkins on Christianity, Vol. II. p. 243—245. see. Stillingfleet, Orig. Sacr. p. 516—518, and Dr. Cha. Owen on Serpents, Dissert. IV. p. 216, 232.

f They said that he was a God.] Grattius, Dr. Whitby and some others think, they took him for Hercules, Δημός-κορασίων, who was worshipped in this island, and was, according to Ptolemy, (Geogr. hist. iv. cap. 4.) one of the gods of the Phoenicians.

h The chief of the island.] Grattius has produced an ancient inscription, by which it appears, that the title of ἔπαυς, or chief, was given to the governor of this island, and so it is used here by St. Luke with his usual propriety of expression.
They leave Malta, and pursue their voyage to Rome.

10 Who also honoured us with many honours, and when we departed, they laden us with such things as were necessary.

11 And after three months we departed in a ship of Alexandria, which had wintered in the isle, whose sign was Castor and Pollux.

12 And landing at Syracuse, we tarried there three days.
The brethren come to meet them on their way to Rome.

15 And from thence we fetched a compass, and came to Rhegium: and after one day the south wind blew, and we came the next day to Puteoli:

14 Where we found brethren, and were desired to tarry with them seven days: and so we went toward Rome.

15 And from thence when the brethren heard of us, they came to meet us as far as Appii-forum, and the Three Taverns: whom when Paul saw, he thanked God, and took courage.

the most considerable city of that island, we continued there three days. From whence we coasted round the eastern shore of Sicily, and came over-against the city and promontory of Rhegium in the southernmost part of Italy, from which, as the name of that place implies, it was supposed the Island of Sicily was broken off. And after lying by one day we had a favourable gale, and the south wind arising, we pursued our voyage, and came in two days to Puteoli, a noted town for trade, which lay not far from Naples, and was very famous for its hot baths; Where we had no sooner landed but we found some christian brethren, and were earnestly entreated to stay with them seven days, that they might have the better opportunity of hearing Paul, and of conversing with him; and the centurion was so good as to consent that we should stay: And so, having left the ship, we went the rest of the way by land to Rome.

And from thence several of the christian brethren who resided at Rome, having heard of our affairs, and particularly that we were on our way thither, (as they were sensible of the great character of Paul, and the important obligations which they were under to him for his excellent epistle to the Romans, written a few years before this) came out to meet us, and to attend us in our entrance into that illustrious city: And [some] of them came as far as Appii Forum a town adjoining to the famous Appian way, which was fifty-one miles distant from Rome: and [others] only to a place called Tres Taberne or, the Three Taverns, which was but about thirty: Whom when Paul saw, he thanked God for the encouragement which this circumstance gave him, to hope that these christian friends, who were so forward to begin an acquaintance with him, would be a support to him during his confinement there, and a means of promoting the success of any attempts of usefulness, which he might be able to make among them; and accordingly he took courage and

Lis. Hist. lib. xxv. cap. 31.) It was by this time well recovered from the desolation which Marcellus had brought upon it; two hundred and ten years before Christ, when the celebrated Archimedes was slain here.

k The christian brethren who resided at Rome.] It is very remarkable, that we have no certain information by whom Christianity was first preached in Rome. Probably, as some inhabitants of that most famous city were present at Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost, (Acts ii. 10.) they being converted themselves, might at their return carry the gospel thither, confirming it by miraculous works, and by the exercise of extraordinary gifts.

1 He thanked God, and took courage.] This expression may perhaps intimate, that his
and pursued the small remainder of his journey with new spirit and alacrity.

Acts XXVIII. 16 And when we came to Rome, Julius the centurion, who ever since we set out from Caesarea had treated us in so friendly a manner, and whose regard for Paul could not but be greatly increased by what had passed at Melita, delivered the prisoners, according to his commission, to the prefect or captain of the praetorian band: But as he gave a very kind and honourable account of Paul, he was permitted to dwell apart from the other prisoners in an house of his own with a Roman soldier that guarded him, till his cause might be heard; which, by one incident and another, was put off from time to time, so that it was not dispatched till above two years after his arrival at Rome.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. Let us again pause, and, on this new occasion of doing it, 1, 2 adore the wise conduct of Providence, though its ways were in the sea, and its paths in the great waters. (Psal. lxxvii. 19.) Still did our dear Redeemer take care of his faithful servants and ministers, not only delivering them and their companions from destruction...
tion by shipwreck, but providing tenderly for them in their destitute condition, when their wet and probably torn garments seem to have been all they could call their own. The custom of Rome and Greece taught them to call all nations but their own barbarous; but surely the generosity which these uncultivated inhabitants of Malta shewed, was far more valuable than all the varnish which the politest education could give, where it taught not humanity and compassion.

It is with pleasure that we trace amongst them the force of conscience, and the belief of Providence: which some more learned people have stupidly thought it philosophy to despise; But they erred in concluding that calamities must always be interpreted as judgments; and let us guard against the same error, lest, like them, we unwarily censure, not only the innocent, but the excellent of the earth.

God wrought a most seasonable miracle for the preservation of Paul from the fury of the viper; and this frank and honest, though ignorant people, immediately retract their censure: But, as human nature is apt to do, they fall immediately from one extreme to another, and from pronouncing him a murderer, conclude him a god. They afterwards submitted to be better taught, and learnt to regard him as what he really was, a holy man favoured of heaven, and raised up to be an instrument of great good, both to the bodies and souls of his fellow-creatures. Let us also be willing candidly to correct and confess our mistakes, when means of better information offer; and study to adjust our notions of men's characters according to truth; that we may neither calumniate nor defile them, but judge righteous judgment. (John vii. 24.)

Well was Publius, the chief of the island, with the other inhabitants of it, rewarded for their kindness to these distressed strangers, by the cures wrought on the diseased in their respective families; and naturally did their kindness and liberality to them increase, with such experience of the miraculous power which wrought by Paul. We cannot but conclude that this holy apostle, whose heart was always so warm with zeal for Christ, especially when it was quickened with such a deliverance, would take this happy opportunity of diffusing the savour of his name here. He would tell them, no doubt, who it was healed them, and testify to them of that greater salvation and more important cure, which they were to seek from him; nor can we imagine that his labour was entirely in vain in the Lord. Happy wreck! on the ruins of which the temple of the Lord was raised, and by occasion of which Barbarians were transformed into Christians! Who can say, how many distempered minds were healed? how many sons and daughters were born to God and to glory, in these three months which Paul
Paul sends for the Jews at Rome.

Paul and Luke spent here? For modest as that beloved physician of souls, as well as of bodies, is in every thing relating to himself, we cannot imagine that he was inactive or unsuccessful in the pious labour. And how naturally did all this tend to raise the regard of the ship's company for these servants of the most high God, to whom, as instruments in the hand of his good Providence they first owed their lives, and now their accommodations; to whom also, we hope, some of them owed even their own souls!

16 It is extremely probable, that the indulgence shewed to Paul in Rome, the remains of liberty which he enjoyed while in bonds there, and the much more valued opportunities of usefulness which that liberty gave him, were, in some degree at least, owing to the experience and report of these extraordinary events. Thus, O Lord, shalt thou lead us into whatever difficulties and dangers thou pleasest, and we will cheerfully wait the happy event which shall at length prove the wisdom and kindness of thy most mysterious conduct.

14, 16 In the mean time, even while travelling in the bonds of affliction, may we see thine hand in all the countenance which we meet with from our Christian brethren; and cheered with their converse and their friendly offices, may we, like Paul, thank God and take courage in an humble assurance that thou wilt stand by us in every future unknown extremity; and wilt either manifest thy power and goodness in raising up human supports, or display thine all-sufficiently in a yet more glorious manner, by bearing us up when they all fail us!

Sect. LX.

The history concludes with an account of a solemn audience which Paul had of the Jews at Rome, soon after his arrival there; most of them reject the gospel he published among them, but he continues to preach it during two years of his confinement. Acts XXVIII. 17, to the end.

Acts XXVIII. 17.

Paul's confinement at Rome was not so strict, but he had liberty to send for persons to him; and while he waited for his appeal to be determined, he was willing to remove the prejudices of his countrymen, and notwithstanding the injurious treatment he had met with, would suffer nothing to be wanting on his part, to make them sensible of the affectionate regard that he had for them: Accordingly it came to pass that after he had been there three days, Paul called
And tells them his case.

—And when they were come together, he said unto them, Men and brethren, though I have committed nothing against the people, or customs of our fathers, yet was I delivered prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans: 18 Who, when they had examined me, would have let me go, because there was no cause of death in me.

19 But when the Jews spake against it, I was constrained to appeal unto Caesar; not that I had ought to accuse my nation of.

20 For this cause therefore have I called for you to see you, and to speak with you; because that for the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain.

21 And they said unto him, We neither received letters out of Judea concerning thee, neither
They are willing to hear what were his sentiments.

Acts XXVIII. 22. But we are willing thou shouldest give us an account of thy doctrine, and desire to hear from thee what thou thinkest: what thy particular sentiments are, and what thou hast to say in defence of thy tenets, as a disciple and missionary of Jesus of Nazareth; for as concerning this sect which professes so high a regard to him, it is known to us in the general, that it is everywhere spoken against, and that bad sentiments are entertained of it, both by the Jews and Heathens: as teaching a revolt from those ways of worship in which people have been educated, even among us as well as them, and requiring unbounded subjection to a person who seems to have no imaginable claim to it.

23 And having appointed him a certain day which might best suit the convenience of most that were then present, many of them came to him in the morning at his lodging: to whom he expounded various passages of their own scriptures, as well as the chief principles of the Christian faith; testifying in the most cogent and pathetic manner the erection and establishment of the kingdom of God under the Messiah: and earnestly persuading them of the things that relate to the Lord Jesus under that character; which he proved both from the law of Moses, and from the writings of the prophets: And he was so intent upon this grand affair, that he continued his discourse from morning till evening.

*It is everywhere spoken against.] Some think, this refers to a fact mentioned by Justin Martyr, *Dialog.,* lib. I. p. 711, & c. *Vulg. Trans.* and afterwards by Origen, *Contra Celtes. lib. vi.* p. 293, 294; and Eucharius, *Eccles. Hist. lib. iv.* cap. 18, that the Jews at Jerusalem sent chosen men of the most distinguished character all over the world, representing the Christians as an unlawful sect, and charging them with the grossest calamities, which the ignorant Heathens advanced against them. The fact itself is in all respects very credible; but I apprehend, that the exact date of it cannot be ascertained, nor can I any where find, (as some have asserted,) that it is mentioned by Paul Judgas. See my *Sermons on the power and grace of Christ,* &c. Vol. II.

b *Testifying the kingdom of God.] Probably, as Mr. Cradock well observes, *Apol. Hist.* Part II. p. 306, he insisted on two topics:—that the kingdom of God, which they had so long expected, was of a spiritual, and not of a temporal nature; and that Jesus of Nazareth, in whose name he preached, was the person foretold as the promised Messiah and Lord of that kingdom.

c *From morning till evening.] The length of this conference shows, how zealous a desire Paul had for the conversion of his countrymen. It was undoubtedly a very curious and important discourse, and we should have wished to have been favoured with
He gives an account of the faith, but most of them reject it.

24 And some believed the things which were spoken, and some believed not.

And the event of what he said was various; for some of them were happily persuaded to embrace Christianity, by the things which were spoken; and some, on the other hand, were influenced by such strong prejudices, that they believed not, but were so hardened as to reject the gospel, amidst all the evidence which he advanced to support it. And so disagreeing with each other, they brake up the assembly; Paul only saying [this] one word in the close of all, on occasion of that obstinacy which he observed to prevail in most of them, Surely well did the Holy Spirit speak by Isaiah the prophet to our fathers of old, (Isa. vi. 9, 10,) and well does the description it has given of them set forth the hardness of your hearts, and suit you even to this day; When it says, in that awful commission the prophet was commanded to discharge, Go to this perverse and obstinate people, to whom I have so often sent in vain, and say, Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand: and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive: For the heart of this people is become gross, and as it were grown stiff with fatness; and with their ears they hear heavily, in a dull, stupid way; and they have drawn their eyes together, as it were on purpose to compose themselves to sleep, lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them:

As if he had said. They act in such a manner under the most awaking means, as if they had studied artful ways of rendering themselves insensible, and were determined not to receive my message, and the salvation which it proposes to them. Therefore be it known unto you, however your proud hearts may resent it, that

with it, as well as with that of our Lord, of which we have only a general account Luke xxiv. 27. But, as God (for wise reason, no doubt,) has seen fit to deny us that pleasure, let us acquiesce in this, that we know enough to confirm our faith in the gospel, if we discover a teachable temper; and, if we do not, the narration of other discourses and facts would probably have occasioned new cavils; for there is hardly any argument in favour of truth, from which a prejudiced and captious wit cannot draw an objection, and frame a sophistry to maintain error.

"Well did the Holy Spirit speak to our fathers, and well does the description suit you, &c.] The apostle here could not refer to them all, because some believed: but it is probable, most of them rejected the gospel—As for the quotation from Isaiah which he applies to them, I would observe, that it is quoted other than any other text from the Old Testament, (that is, six times,) in the New; (here, and Mat. xiii. 14, 15. Mark iv. 12. Luke viii. 10. John xii. 40. and Rom. xi. 8.) yet in such a variety of expression, as plainly proves, the apostles did not confine themselves exactly either to the words of the original or of the Greek Version.

Paul
He continues two years at Rome, preaching the gospel.

that the salvation of God which you despise, and seem to fortify yourselves against, is sent to the Gentiles: and they will hear and embrace [it,] and so inherit the blessings which you reject: To them therefore will we preach all the words of this life, and I in particular will from this day forward, seek, in their faith and obedience, my consolation under that grief which the infidelity of my brethren gives me.

And when he had said these things, the Jews departed out of the place, not being prevailed upon to receive the gospel, yet having great debates among themselves; some thinking there was considerable weight in what Paul had urged to defend it, while others were enraged, and spoke of him and his arguments with great contempt and indignation.

But nevertheless they who were most his enemies, and most desirous to add affliction to his bonds, were not permitted by providence to do him any harm; for after this Paul continued two whole years at Rome, in his own hired house, before he was heard by Caesar, or his deputy, upon his appeal: And during this long period of time, he was solicitous to do all he could to promote the gospel of his divine Master, though he could not act so freely as he desired; in this view, therefore, he received all that came to him to be instructed in the design and evidence of the gospel, Preaching with great ardor and zeal the kingdom of God, as established in the person of his exalted Son, and teaching those things which relate to the Lord Jesus Christ, and the religion he hath instituted in the world, with all freedom of speech, [and] without any restraint from the Roman magistrates. In consequence of this, many converts were made, and this confinement, which seemed to have so discouraging an aspect, was on the whole a means of

the salvation of God, is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they hear it.

29 And when he had said these words, the Jews departed, and had great reasoning among themselves.

30 And Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, and received all that came in unto him.

31 Preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him.

Paul continued two whole years at Rome.] As Luke concludes his history with Paul's abode at Rome, before his journey into Spain, we may infer, as Dr. More observes, (Theolog. Works, p. 220,) that he wrote both his Gospel and the Acts, while the apostle was still living, of whose actions he was himself an eye-witness, and by whom, it is very probable, this book was received, as the ancients also say his Gospel was.

In his own hired house.] Dr. Lardner proves from Ulpian, that the procurator was to judge, whether a person under accusation were to be thrown into prison, or delivered to a soldier to keep, or committed to sureties, or trusted on his parole of honour. (Credib. Book I. chap. 10, § 9, Vol. I. p. 524, 525.) It appears from hence, that the persecution against Christians at Rome was not then begun; and perhaps Paul's friends in Nero's family (Phil. iv. 22.) used their interest with the emperor to procure him this liberty.
of promoting the gospel: Many of his retired
hours were also employed in corresponding
with the Christian churches, and writing sev-
eral of those excellent epistles which were to be
so great a blessing to the most distant ages.

IMPROVEMENT.

Let us with pleasure observe that uniform tenor of Christian
zeal, and compassionate regard to the salvation of men, which pre-
vailed in the mind of Paul, and reigned in it even to the very period
of this history, yea to that of his life. No sooner was he arrived at
Rome, but an earnest desire of communicating the blessings of the
gospel to his kinsmen according to the flesh, engaged him to send
for the Jews, and to confer with them concerning the kingdom of
God; generously forgetting his own wrongs, and waving those
complaints he might so justly have made against his accusers and
persecutors. He found them here, as well as in Judea, under
prejudices which he could not conquer, with all his strength of
reason and eloquence: They called the Christian religion a sect,
and maintained that it was every where spoken against; But if

* Many of his retired hours were also
employed in corresponding, &c.] It is
well known, that the Epistle to the Ephe-
sians, (or, as some think, to the Laoci-
dans, whom however, it is certain Paul
did write, Col. iv. 16,) to the Colossians,
and Philippians, as well as that to Phile-
mon, were written from hence during this
imprisonment, and that to the Hebrews
in or quickly after it; but, as for the Se-
cond to Timothy, I am ready to think it of
a later date. — It seems highly probable,
that, about the end of the two years here
spoken of, he was set at liberty. Some
have questioned, whether he ever returned
into the East again, which yet from Phi-
lion, ver. 22, and Heb. xii. 23, he seems
to have expected. Clemens Romanus
(ad. Cor. Epist. ii. cap. 5.) expressly tells
us that he preached in the West, and that
to its utmost bounds, which must at least
include Spain, whither he intended to go.
Rom. xv. 24, 25. (See Chrysot. Vol. VIII.
p. 59.) Theodoret adds, that he went to
the Islands of the sea, as elsewhere he num-
bbers Gaul, (that is France,) and Britain,
among the disciples of the tent-maker. (See
in what order he took these places, or
how long he remained in any of them,
cannot be determined.— We are told
however, that about the year of Christ 63,
or 67, (for chronologers differ, and I think
we cannot exactly fix it,) he returned to
Rome, where some say he met with Peter,
who was thrown into prison with other
Christians, on a pretence of being con-
cerned in the burning of the city. Chrys-
sotom tells us, that he here converted
one of Nero's concubines, which so in-
censed that cruel prince, that he put him
to death; probably after an imprison-
ment, in which the Second Epistle to Timothy was written — It is, I think, uni-
versally agreed, among all ancient writers
who mention his death, that he was beheaded
at Aquae Salviae, three miles from Rome;
for, being free of that city, he could not be
crucified, as Peter was, according to the
tradition of the Latin church, on the very
same day. It is said, and there is great
reason to believe it, that this glorious con-
fessor gave his head to the fatal stroke
with the greatest cheerfulness, and also,
that he was buried in the Via Ostiensis, two
miles from Rome, where Constantine the
Great erected a church to his memory;
A. D. 318, which was successively re-
paired and beautified by Theodorus the
Great, and the Empress Placidia. (See
25; and Dr. Well's Geogr. of the New Testa-
ment, Part II. chap. 6, § 12 — 23.) But
his most glorious monument remains in
his immortal writings, which, if God spare
my life to illustrate, I shall esteem the
doing it one of the greatest honours which
can be conferred upon me, and the most
important service my pen can perform
for the church of Christ.
this were indeed the case, how far was it from being any reason
against embracing and obeying the gospel! since all the men upon
Ver. earth might attempt in vain to make falsehood truth, and truth
22 falsehood, in any single instance; and might as well pull the sun
from the firmament, as, by their malice and rage, dethrone that
blessed Redeemer whom God had established, by a decree firmer
than the ordinances of heaven.

26, 27 No scripture of the Old Testament is more frequently referred to
in the New than those words of Isaiah, which contain so just a de-
scription of what the Jewish nation was in the days of that prophet,
and in those of Christ and his apostles. How deplorable a case!
to be spiritually blind and deaf under the brightest light of the gospel,
and its loudest proclamations! To harden the heart against th
most gracious offers of healing and life, and to arm themselves
25 against their own salvation with weapons of eternal death! Justly
were they at last given over by God, and sealed up under incurable
obstnacny. May divine pity and help be extended to those who
28 are marching on by large steps towards the same character, and as
it seems towards the same end! Adore be divine grace, that any
are inclined to hear, and to obey. To them the ministers of Christ
may turn with pleasure, and find, in their believing regards to the
gospel, a sufficient recompence for all the labours and hazards they
encounter in a faithful concern for its propagation.

To conclude all, Let us adore the gracious conduct of providence,
30, 31 which secretly interposed to moderate the apostle's confinement, and
thereby gave him an opportunity of performing various and exten-
sive services to the church, of which he must otherwise have been
incapable. The wrath of man praises God; and the remainder of it
he restrains. (Psal. lxxvi. 10.) He hath allotted to each of his
servants, in his infinite wisdom and goodness, a due proportion both
of labours and sufferings, and neither earth nor hell shall be able so
to break in on his schemes, as to obstruct the one or increase the
other. The sacred history, which is now closing upon us, affords
many illustrations of this remark: Let us be thankful for it; and
while we peruse it, let us indulge those reflections which may na-
turally arise from it, to establish our faith in the gospel, and to
quicken our obedience to it. Amen!

THE END OF THE FAMILY EXPOSITOR ON THE ACTS.
APPENDIX.

NUMBER I.

A DISSERTATION

On Sir Isaac Newton's Scheme for reducing the several Histories contained in the Evangelists to their proper Order.

The name of Sir Isaac Newton is so justly celebrated through the learned world, that they who know he has endeavoured to establish a method of settling a chronology of our Lord's life, (for I think one can hardly call it an harmony of the evangelists.) quite different to what has hitherto been advanced, may be curious to know what it is, and why we presume to depart from it; since it is so natural to imagine, that such a genius must demonstrate whatever he attempts to prove. I therefore think it incumbent upon me to lay the scheme before my reader, as I promised long since to do. (Note on Mat. iv. 25, Vol I. p. 197.) After which I shall briefly present, in one view, those reasons, many of which have been already hinted, which compelled me to tread a different road, after having most attentively considered all that this illustrious writer has urged for the support of his plan.

I cannot set myself to this task without feeling the fatigue of it sensibly allayed, by the pleasure with which I reflect on the firm persuasion which a person of his unequalled sagacity must have entertained of the truth of Christianity, in order to his being engaged to take such pains in illustrating the sacred oracles: A pleasure which, I doubt not, every good reader will share with me: especially as according to the best information, whether public or private I could ever get, his firm faith in the divine revelation discovered itself in the most genuine fruits of substantial virtue and piety; and consequently gives us the justest reason to conclude, that he is now rejoicing in the happy effects of it, infinitely more than in all the applause which his philosophical works have procured him, though they have commanded a fame lasting as the world; the true theory of which he had discovered, and in spite of all the vain efforts of ignorance, pride, and their offspring bigotry, have arrayed him as it were in the beams of the sun, and inscribed his name among the constellations of heaven.

Sir Isaac Newton has given us his sentiments on the Chronology Vol. III.
of our Lord's history, in his Observations on Prophecy, Book I. chap. xi. p. 141—168; and, according to his usual method, he has done it concisely, only marking out some of the outlines; and after having endeavoured to establish some of the chief principles by arguments which he judged to be conclusive, he leaves it to his readers to apply those principles to several other particulars; which being deductible from them, he did not think it necessary to enter into. Such is the method he has also taken in his Chronology of ancient kingdoms; and it was most suitable to that great genius, which bore him with such amazing velocity through so vast a variety of various literature. Yet it must render him less sensible of the difficulty attending some of his schemes than he would otherwise have been, and may leave room to those, who are justly sensible how much they are his inferiors, to shew by their remarks upon him, how possible it is for the greatest of mankind to be misled by some plausible appearances of things in a general view of them, against which invincible objections may arise, when they come to be applied to unthought of particulars.

There are many facts recorded in the evangelists, the order of which is so plain that all harmonies agree in them; and such especially are most of those with which the history begins, and most of those with which it ends, though there be some disputes about a few circumstances relating to the resurrection: But Sir Isaac enters not all into that part of the history, nor into any thing that precedes the appearance of John the Baptist.

He lays it down as the foundation of all his other reasonings and calculations here, on the authority of Luke iii. 1. that John began to baptize in the fifteenth year of Tiberius, reckoning his reign to have commenced from the death of Augustus, which happened, he says, August 28th, in the year of our Lord, according to the common reckoning 29. This is said, (Newt. p. 147,) to have been in the year of the Julian period 4727, which must surely be an error of the press for 4742, the year of that period which is universally known to have answered to the 29th of the received Christian era. He supposes the Baptist's ministry opened in the spring, when the weather was warm; and allowing the remainder of the year to the spreading of his reputation, he concludes that our Lord was baptized before the end of it, when Tiberius's 16th year was begun. (Mat. iii 1—17; Mark i. 1—11; Luke iii. 1—18, 21—23; John i. 6—18, Sect. 15—18. After this the temptation ensued, (Mat. iv. 1—11; Mark i. 12, 13; Luke iv. 1—13, Sect. 19. and all those testimonies of John to Jesus, and the interviews between Jesus and his first disciples, which are mentioned, John i. 19, to the end, Sect. 20—22, as likewise our Lord's journey to Galilee, and his first miracle there. John ii. 1—11, Sect. 23.) Then followed our Lord's FIRST PASSOVER which,
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which, according to Sir Isaac, and I would be understood through all this part of the Dissertation to be only reporting his opinion, happened A. D. 30, at which he drove the traders out of the temple, (John ii. 12, to the end, Sect. 24;) had that celebrated conference with Nicodemus, (John ii. 1—21, Sect. 25, 26;) and continued for some time to abide in Judea baptizing by his disciples, while John baptized in Enon, and bore his last recorded testimony to him. (John iii. 22, to the end, Sect. 27.)

Thus the summer was spent, till John was thrown into prison about November, (Mat. xiv. 3—5; Luke iii. 19, 20. Mark vi. 17—20, Sect. 28.) and our Lord passed through Samaria in his way to Galilee about the winter solstice, that is, four months before harvest: (John iv. 1—12, Sect. 29, 30; See note on John iv. 35) After which he went, first to Cana in Galilee, John iv. 43—54, Sect. 31.— and then, after a circuit (or rather journey) in Galilee, (Mat. iv. 12; Mark i. 14, 15; Luke iv. 11, 15; Sect.—31, 32.—) he came and preached at Nazareth, Luke iv. 16—30, Sect. 32.— and being rejected there, went and settled for a while at Capernaum, where he called Peter, Andrew, James, and John. (Mat. iv. 13—22; Mark i. 16—20; Luke iv. 31, 32; v. 1—11, Sect. 33, 34.) This our author thinks must have taken up all the spring, and must bring us to our Lord’s SECOND PASSOVER, A. D. 31.

It is after this passover that Sir Isaac places another circuit through Galilee, which also carried his fame throughout all Syria, and added multitudes from thence, and from Decapolis, to those that followed him from Judea and Jerusalem. (Mat. iv. 23, to the end; Mark i. 28. Luke iv. 44. Sect.—36.) To those he preached the celebrated sermon on the mount, (Mat. v. vi. viii. Sect. 37—43.) Immediately after which he cured the leper, (Mat. xiii. 1—4; Mark i. 40, to the end; Luke v. 12—16, Sect. 44,) the centurion’s servant, (Mat. viii. 5—13; Luke vii. 1—10, Sect. 55,) and Peter’s mother in law, with many others, (Mat. viii. 14, 17; Mark ii. 28—38; Luke iv. 38—44, Sect. 35, 36.)

By this time Sir Isaac supposes the feast of tabernacles approached, when our Lord passing through Samaria was refused a lodging, (Luke ix. 51—56, Sect. 127.—to which he strangely supposes a reference, Mat. viii. 19, 20, (Sect. 59.)—After which, when the feast was over, and Christ returned from Jerusalem, toward winter, he stilled a tempest as he crossed the sea, (Mat. viii. 23—27; Mark iv. 35, to the end; Luke viii. 22—25, Sect. 69;) and when he had landed, dispossessed the legion; (Mat. viii. 28, to the end; Mark v. 1—21; Luke viii. 26—40, Sect. 70.) And then returning again to the western side of the sea, cured the paralytic, (Mat. ix. 1—8; Mark iv. 1—12; Luke v. 18—26, Sect. 45;)—called Matthew, Mat. ix. 1; Mark ii. 14; Luke v. 27, 28, Sect. 45; and having been entertained at his house, (Mat. ix. 10—17; Mark ii. 15—22; Luke v. 29, to the end, Sect. 71,) went out to raise Jairus’s daughter, curing the woman who had
A dissertation on Sir Isaac Newton's scheme

had a bloody flux by the way: (Mat. ix. 18—26; Mark v. 22, to the end; Luke viii. 41, to the end, Sect. 72.) And after performing other cures, (Mat. ix. 27—34, Sect.—72,) he took another circuit in Galilee, (Mat. ix. 35, to the end, Sect.—73,) gave a charge to his apostles, and sent them out; (Mat. x. 1, to the end; xi. 1; Mark vi. 7—13; Luke ix. 1—6, Sect. 71—76.) After which, having answered the messengers which John had sent, he discourses with the people concerning him, (Mat. ix. 2—19; Luke viii. 3—35, Sect. 57, 53; and upbraids the impenitent cities of Galilee. (Mat. xi. 23, to the end, Sect. 59.) And as these events would employ the winter and the spring, our author places the THIRD PASSOVER here, A. D. 32.

He does not indeed expressly assert that this was the feast at which our Lord cured the lame man at the pool of Bethesda in Jerusalem, and made that defence before the Sanhedrim related in the 4th chapter of John: (Sect. 46—48.) But according to this general plan, this must be its proper place. And that there was a passover about this time, he argues from the story of the discipies rubbing out the ears of corn, which is related as in this place: (Mat. xii. 1—8; Mark ii. 23, to the end: Luke vi. 1—5, Sect. 49.) Soon after which happened the cure of the withered hand, (Mat. xii. 2—13; Mark iii. 1—7; Luke vi. 6—11, Sect. 50,) and a variety of other miracles, Mat. xii. 15—21; Mark iii. 7—12, Sect. 51,) with that of the dispossesion imputed to a confederacy with Beelzebub. (Mat. xii. 22, to the end; Mark iii. 22, to the end; Luke xi. 14—36, Sect. 61—64.) Here Sir Isaac places the parables delivered at the sea side, as he supposes about seed-time, or the feast of the tabernacles; Mat. xiii. 1—52; Mark iv. 1—34; Luke viii. 4—18, Sect. 65—68;) his renewed visit to Nazareth, (Mat. xiii. 53, to the end; Mark vi. 1—6, Sect. 73,) and the return of the twelve, after having spent, as he supposes, a year in their embassy. Mark vi. 30, 31; Luke ix. 10, Sect. 78.—

About this time our author places the beheading of John the Baptist, after he had been in prison two years and a quarter; (Mat. xiv. 1—12; Mark vi. 14—29; Luke ix. 7—9, Sect. 77.) After which those multitudes resorted to Christ, whom he fed with the five loaves, (Mat. xiv. 13—23; Mark vi. 30—46; Luke ix. 10—17; John vi. 1—15, Sect. 78,) and to whom, after having crossed the lake, (Mat. xiv. 24, to the end; Mark vi. 47, to the end; John vi. 16—21, Sect. 79;) he discourses concerning the bread of life. John vi. 21, to the end, Sect. 80—82) As we are expressly told, John vi. 4, that when this miracle was wrought the passover was near, Sir Isaac concludes this to be the FOURTH PASSOVER after our Lord's baptism, A. D. 33, and argues from John vii. 1, that Christ did not celebrate it at Jerusalem.

Quickly after this followed the dispute with the scribes who came from Jerusalem: Mat. xv. 1—20; Mark vii. 1—23; Sect. 83, 84; After which our Lord departed into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon;
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Sidon; and after having dispossessed the daughter of a Syrophoenician woman, (Mat. xv. 21—28; Mark vii. 24, to the end, Sect. 85,) he returned to the sea of Galilee, where he fed the four thousand (Mat. xv. 29, to the end; Mark viii. 1—10, Sect. 86,) and after having replied to the unreasonable demand the Pharisees made of a sign from heaven, and cautioned his disciples against the leaven of their false doctrine, (Mat. xvi. 1—12; Mark vii. 24—26, Sect. 87) he came to Caesarea Philippi, and having by the way acknowledged himself to be the Messiah, he was afterwards transfigured, and ejected an obstinate demon. (Mat. xvi. 13, to the end; xvii. 1—21; Mark viii. 27, to the end; ix. 1—29; Luke ix. 18—43, Sect. 88—91.) He then came to Capernaum, and made provision by a miracle to pay the tribute; (Mat. viii. 24, to the end, Sect. 92;) and there, or in the neighbourhood of it, discharged of humility, forgiveness, &c. (Mat. viii. 1, to the end; Mark ix. 33, to the end; Luke ix. 46—48, Sect. 93—95.)

Our author takes no notice of the mission of the seventy, and their return, Luke x. 1—24, Sect. 97—106, but he would probably have placed it here, previous to that which he supposes to be Christ's last departure from Galilee, (Mat. xix. 1, 2; Mark x. 1, Sect. 135—) when he went up to the feast of tabernacles. (John vii. viii. Sect. 98—105.) Neither does he take notice of the visit to Bethany; (Luke x. 38, to the end, Sect. 108;) nor of the date of any of those discourses which are recorded by Luke (from chap. xi. 1, to chap. xviii. 14, Sect. 109—129,) except where any passages happen to be parallel to those in Matthew, to which he hints they are to be reduced.

He then introduces our Lord's visit to Jerusalem, and the cure of the blind man at the feast of dedication, (John ix. x. Sect. 130—134; after which Christ retired beyond Jordan, (John x. 40,) where he treats of divorce, (Mat. xix. 3—12; Mark x. 2—12, Sect. 135;) blesses the little children, (Mat. xix. 13—15; Mark x. 13—16; Luke xviii. 15—17. Sect. 136,) answers, and remarks upon, the young ruler, (Mat. xix. 16, to the end; xx. 1—16; Mark x. 17—31; Luke xviii. 18—30, Sect. 137, 138;) After which, on the death of Lazarus, he returns to Bethany, and raises him from the dead, (John xi. 1—46, Sect. 139, 140,) and then withdraws to Ephraim, till the approach of the FIFTH-PASSOVER after his baptism, which was the last of his life: The particulars of which are related at large by the evangelists, and with the subsequent circumstances of his death, resurrection, appearances, and ascension, make up the rest of this important history: But the contents need not be inserted here, as (for any thing that appears) there is no material difference between a harmony formed on Sir Isaac's principles or on ours.

I have taken the trouble of quoting the particular passages in each evangelist, as well as of every correspondent section in the Family Expositor, that it may be easy for any one, who desires it, to read over the whole paraphrase according to this new scheme: and also to
to see how it transposes the passages in question, and how it differs from what I judge to be the most exact method of disposition. And the attentive reader will easily see, that there is a difference in the order of several of the stories, and a much greater in the dates we have respectively assigned to several which are placed in the same order by both.

A repetition of all the particulars would perhaps be disagreeable; I shall therefore content myself here with observing in general, that Sir Isaac constantly follows the order of Matthew, whatever transpositions of Mark and Luke it may require, which we do not; and he also concludes there were FIVE PASSOVERS from the baptism to the death of Christ, whereas we, with the generality of harmonizers, suppose there were but FOUR. I have in my notes hinted at some considerations which determined me to the method I have taken: But it will be expected I should here at least touch upon them again, and give a view of them together; which I the rather do as they strongly illustrate each other.

The grand reason why I do not every where follow the order of Matthew, is in one word this, That both Mark and Luke do not only in several instances agree to place the stories otherwise, though we have not the least reason to think that one wrote from the other; but also that they do, one or another of them, expressly assert, "that the events in question actually happened in a different order from that in which Matthew relates them." Whereas it is observable, that in all such cases Matthew does not so expressly assert his order, as to contradict theirs. A few instances of this may be expedient, and a few shall suffice.

Thus, though Matthew relates the cure of Peter's mother-in-law, (Sect. 35,) in his viiiith chapter, ver. 14, 15, after the sermon on the mount, and, according to Sir Isaac, some months after the call of Peter, Andrew, James, and John, which he had related chap. iv. 18—22; Mark says, this cure was immediately after they came out of the synagogue, into which they entered straitway after the call of those disciples, Mark i. 20—29.

Again, though Matthew gives us the story of Christ's calming the sea, dispossessioning Legion, and curing the paralytic, in the latter part of his viiith and beginning of his ixth chapter, and does not relate the parables of the sower, tares, &c. delivered from the ship till the xiiith, and places so many facts between, that Sir Isaac concludes the miracle to have been wrought in winter, sometime before the Passover. A. D. 32, and the parables not to have been delivered till about the Feast of Tabernacles, almost a year after. Mark is very punctual in assuring us, (chap. iv. 35, & seq.) that, in the evening of the same day in which the parables were delivered from the ship, Jesus calmed the sea, and dispossessioned Legion; for which reason I have followed him, and placed these miracles immediately after the parables: (sect. 69, 70;) but have set that of the paralytic much higher, sect. 45,) as both Luke and Mark connect it strongly with the cure of the leper, which
which Sir Isaac allows to have happened immediately after the sermon on the mount.

Matthew relates the message of John, and those subsequent discourses of our Lord, which are contained in his xth chapter, after having given us an account of the mission of the Apostles in his xth. But Luke (who more accurately distinguishes between their call, Luke vi. 13—16; and mission, Luke ix. 2—6: as Mark also does, with the account of several miracles on which it is founded, as well as the circuit which our Lord made with the twelve before he sent them on, and the fore-mentioned miracles of calming the sea, dispossessing Legion, &c. between those two events, that is, the call, and actual mission, of the twelve; the one of which must in all reason be supposed considerably to precede the other; in which he also agrees with Mark, as was observed above.

Matthew also relates the story of the disciples rubbing out the ears of corn, and the cure of the withered hand, (chap. xii. 1—12) after the mission of the twelve; whereas both Luke and Mark place which ever of those events they mention before the choice of them; (see Mark iii. 1—6; Luke vi. 1—11;) and Luke expressly says, that choice was in those days, (Luke vi. 12, 13,) that is, at the time which followed the fore-mentioned events.

These, and the discourse on the unpardonable sin (sect 61,) which we readily allow might have happened twice, are all the most material transpositions we have made; and I must submit it to the judgment of the reader, whether it be not more for the honour of the New Testament in general, to suppose that Matthew might not intend exactly to preserve the order of the history, where he asserts nothing directly concerning it, than to suppose both Mark and Luke to have mistaken it, when they so expressly declare their regard to it, as in some of these instances they do.

Sir Isaac indeed urges, that Matthew (as well as John, in whom I have made scarce any transposition) was an eye-witness: but this can have no weight, unless it be certain, that he every-where intended to observe an exact order, which, for variety of reasons or causes, many of which may be to us unknown, he might not be solicitous about*. And I cannot forbear observing, that, on this great man's own principles there cannot be a great deal in the argument; for, as Matthew was not called till chap. ix. 9, he could not, according to his hypothesis, have been an eye and ear witness to all the events from chap. iv. to that place; and, if (as Sir Isaac also argues,) he was sent out as one of the twelve, chap. x. init. and continued a year on his embassy, he could not be such a witness to what passed from the beginning of chap. xi. to the end of chap. xiii, where he places their return after a year's absence:

* Mr. Jere. Jones has hinted at some conjectural reasons in his Vindication of the former part of St. Matthew's gospel: See chap. iii. p. 29—34.
absence: And these are the chapters, where we have made the greatest and most material transpositions, the others hardly deserving a mention.

If this branch of Sir Isaac's argument falls to the ground, and it be not allowed that Matthew observed a strict chronological order, that part of his reasoning, by which he would fix the date of each event, must fall with it; for, if it were to be granted, that Matthew hinted at the different seasons of the year when they passed, we could not fix the chronology by that, unless we were sure, that each was such a season of a different year, and not of the same, which on this supposition we cannot assert: But I think it very easy (ex abundanti) to shew, that passages which Sir Isaac produces as indications of the seasons, are not so, or at least do not point them out so punctually, as they ought to do, in order to justify the uses he would make of them.

One cannot but wonder, that some of the arguments, which I have now in my eye, should ever have been urged by a writer of such extraordinary discernment; as for instance, that he should conclude the Sermon on the mount must be preached later than the Passover, because multitudes followed Christ in the open fields, which he says (p. 151.) was an argument of the summer season: though it is so apparent, that, when there were those five thousand men besides women and children assembled around him, whom he fed with the five loaves, the Passover was only at hand; (John vi. 4:) or that he should say, (p. 153,) the storm, mentioned Mat. viii. 23, "shews the winter was now come on," as if there were no storms in the summer; or once more, that it must be seed-time when the parables in Mat. xiii. were delivered, "because sowing seed is mentioned in them." (p. 154) when it is so evident, (as I have observed elsewhere, note on Mark iv. 3, Vol. I. p. 310,) the very same principle would prove it to be harvest, as another parable delivered the same day refers to that season.

I am not willing to swell this Dissertation; and therefore, omitting many remarks which might easily be made on other passages, I will conclude with the mention of two or three particulars, which might contribute to lead this illustrious writer into some error.

One thing that has occasioned this was, his taking it for granted (as I observed before,) that the fifteenth year of Tiberius, in which John the Baptist opened his ministry, must needs be reckoned from the death of Augustus; whereas it ought to be computed from the time, when Augustus made him his colleague in the empire. (See note on Luke iii. 1, Vol. I. p. 91.)

Another is, his admitting the rabbinical rules for the translation of the Jewish feasts, of which we have no one word, either in the scriptures, or in Josephus, or Philo. Yet it is on this principle, that he rejects some years from the possibility of being the year of Christ's suffering, because (as he imagines,) the Passover, two years before each, would not fall late enough to have the corn ripe on the
the Sabbath that succeeded the Passover*. (See notes b and c on Luke vi. 1. Vol. I. p. 112, 113.)

And, to mention no more, a third principle (which is also very precarious, and yet has much stress laid upon it in Sir Isaac’s scheme,) is, his taking it for granted, that, whenever Matthew speaks of Christ’s going about Galilee and preaching in the synagogues there, he intends to tell us that our Lord made a circuit over all the country; which, if it were admitted, might indeed make it necessary (if Matthew’s order were to be the standard,) to suppose a longer space of time, than we or most others allow, to have passed between his entrance on his public work, and the Passover just preceding the rubbing out the ears of corn, which we own on both sides to have been two years before his death; for four circuits of this kind are mentioned, before we come to the xith chapter of Matthew, where the story last referred to is recorded; the first, John iv. 43, and Luke iv. 14, 15; the second, Mat. iv. 23; the third, Mat. ix. 35; and the fourth, Mat. xi. 1. But if we should grant, that his going about all Galilee in the second of these instances, and his going about all the cities and villages in the third, (though that might only be those on the shore of the Sea of Tiberias,) were to be taken ever so literally, yet his passing through Galilee in his way from Sichar to Nazareth in the first instance, and his departing, that is, setting out to teach and to preach in their cities in the fourth, can infer no such conclusion.

This might be suggested, even if Matthew’s order were to be admitted, and would invalidate the argument for protracting the years of our Lord’s ministry on that supposition; but it is to be remembered, we have produced arguments to prove, that order must sometimes be inverted, and particularly, that Christ going about all the cities and villages, (Matt. ix. 35, sect. 73,) and his departing to teach and to preach in their cities, (Matt. xi. 1, sect. 76,) was some considerable time after the Passover, after which the ears of corn were rubbed out. (Matt. xii. 1, sect. 49.)

On the whole, I think, that, if our order be admitted, there is no part of Christ’s ministry which seems so crowded with business, as that between his last passover but one, and the following Feast of Dedication. But here, our Harmony allows more time for the work in Galilee, than Sir Isaac, who supposes “Christ never returned thither after the Feast of Tabernacles;” and I leave the reader to judge, whether, if such a variety of journeys and events must be allowed to have happened in these nine months, or according to him in six, we may not by a parity of reason, or rather with greater, comprehend all the preceding within the compass of about sixteen; especially when it is considered, that, according to Sir Isaac, that progress of our Lord, for which the apostles were intended

* I shall content myself with observing here, that on these principles Sir Isaac places the Passover, A. D. 31, on Wednesday, March 28.——A. D. 32, on Monday, April 14. — A. D. 33, on Friday, April 2.——and A. D. 34, on Friday, April 22.
intended to make way, and that after the embassy of the seventy, must be thrown into the first six months of this year, and is an extreme, and I think insurmountable difficulty, into which we shall not be driven.

I shall conclude this Dissertation with one reflection, which may perhaps be of some use to those, who have but little relish for the niceties of this inquiry: I mean, that, when we find this great master, and I had almost said, (so far at the title can be applied to a mortal man,) this great father of reason, falling into such obvious mistakes,

* To make the reader more sensible of this, I shall add a brief survey of the compass of time, within which I suppose the principal events between the several Passovers of our Lord's ministry to have happened, referring him to the following chronological table for a more exact view of them.

**Events which we suppose between the first and second of our Lord's Passovers.**

Our Lord spends the summer, and beginning of the winter, in Judea; about the winter solstice passes through Samaria into Galilee; (§ 23—30;) spends the remainder of the winter and the spring in a circuit through Galilee, in which are included his visit to Nazareth, and short stay at Capernaum; and toward the close of the circuit, having preached his celebrated sermon on the mount, returns to Capernaum.—§ 31—43.

**Events between the second and third Passovers.**

After vindicating what passed upon rubbing out the ears of corn, and curing the withered hand, he travels to the Sea of Galilee, chooses his apostles, and makes another abode at Capernaum; visits Nain, and dismisses John's messengers; all which might pass before the end of May; (§ 46—60;) then travels with the twelve in his train, (Luke viii. 1; Mat. ix. 35,) through the places near the Sea of Tiberias, perhaps during the months of June, July, and August; (§ 61—73;) and, intending a much more extensive circuit, dispatches the twelve to make way for him, and probably setting out quickly after them, might employ six months in this part of it, (§ 74—77;) and leave sufficient time for his interview with the five thousand whom he miraculously fed, and his conference with the Scribes and Pharisees from Jerusalem before the next Pass; (§ 78—81.)

**Events between Christ's third Passover and the Feast of Dedication, which preceded his fourth.**

Allowing the time between the Passover and the end of May for his journey to the coasts of Tyre and Sidon, and other places in Galilee, he might return to Danmantha, and feed the four thousand by that time; (§ 83, 84;) and, if subsequent events and discourses, (recorded § 87—96;) employed him till the end of June, he might then send out the seventy, and they might easily meet him at Jerusalem at the Feast of Tabernacles in September; between which, and the Feast of Dedication, near the end of December, we must place his last circuit in Galilee, (§ 97—127;) unless (which is possible,) we suppose it to have been quickly after the mission of the seventy, and so some part of July and September to have been employed in it: And indeed one cannot imagine any necessity, that all the seventy, or all the apostles, should have finished their progress, before our Lord began to follow those that were sent to the nearest places; or, if we should suppose it, and follow Sir Isaac's scheme, we must of necessity place the two circuits, which followed these two embassies, within this space of time, as was hinted above; whereas, if we consider the journey to the coast of Tyre and Sidon as an appendix to the former, we may (according to our scheme) assign near eight months to that grand tour of our Lord, in which he followed the twelve, which might make it convenient to dispatch that in which he followed the seventy in proportionally less time: And I believe, that, if we consider Galilee not to have been larger than three or four of our western counties, we shall more easily acquiesce in the competency of the time assigned to these visits to it.
mistakes, as I have been obliged here to point out, it tends to give us an humbling idea of the imperfections of the human mind in its present state; and consequently, we may learn from it two of the most important lessons that can be imagined in social life;—a caution, lest we assert our own opinions with too dogmatical an air;—and a care to avoid such petulancy in censuring the mistakes of others, as if we thought none but the weakest and most contemptible of mankind were capable of being misled by the specious appearances of some inconclusive arguments; and I will venture to say, that, if Sir Isaac Newton's error in the order of the Harmony teach us this candour, it will be a much greater benefit to us, than if he had placed every circumstance relating to it beyond all possibility of farther dispute.
I never had, nor never took, an opportunity of looking into Dupin's Life of Christ, till about a year ago, long after the publication of the second edition of my Paraphrase on the Evangelists; but then I found, to my agreeable surprise, a more perfect agreement between his scheme of the Harmony and mine, than I expected anywhere to have met with, and particularly in the story of the resurrection.

Of the 203 sections, into which I have divided the Evangelists, we differ only in the order of 29; and, as several of these are inseparably connected, there are only, on the whole, nine stories or discourses, in which there is a variety in our order.

The first, sect. 12, The wise men's visit to Christ, which he places before the presentation, sect. 11.

The second, sect. 37—43, Matthew's account of the Sermon on the mount, which he supposes to have been coincident with that in Luke, sect. 53, 54, which I consider as a repetition of it.

The third, sect. 62, 70, The stilling the tempest, and dispossessing Legion, which he places before the calling of Matthew, and immediately after sect. 26.

The fourth, sect. 96, Christ's reproving John for an instance of the narrowness of his spirit, which, as a similar and undetermined fact, he subjoins to sect. 93, Christ's checking the ambition of his disciples.

The fifth, sect. 106, The return of the seventy, which he connects with the story of their mission, sect. 97.

The sixth, sect. 118, Christ's urging the necessity of striving for heaven, &c., which he strangely introduces between sect. 154 and 158.

The seventh, The discourses and facts, sect. 126—135, which he scatters promiscuously after sect. 105, and elsewhere.

The eighth, sect. 170, The intimation of Judas's treachery, the Eucharist, sect. 172.

And the last, sect. 181, The warning Christ gave of Peter's denying him, which he joins with sect. 171, though I take them to be two different predictions of the same event.

The reader may see my reasons for the order in which I have placed most of these sections, in the notes upon them; but I cannot forbear thinking, that such a coincidence in all the rest, where the one could not write from the other, is a strong presumption in favour of both.
NUMBER II.

A DISSERTATION

On the Inspiration of the New Testament, as proved from the facts recorded in the Historical Books of it.

NOTHING can be more evident, than that a firm and cordial belief of the Inspiration of the sacred scripture is of the highest moment, not only to the edification and peace of the church, but in a great measure to its very existence; for, if this be given up, the authority of the revelation is enervated, and its use destroyed; the star which is to direct our course is clouded, our compass is broke to pieces, and we are left to make the voyage of life, in sad uncertainty, amidst a thousand rocks, and shelves, and quicksands. I hope therefore, I may perform a service acceptable to God and my Christian brethren, while I endeavour, as plainly and as briefly as I can, to place some leading proofs of it in a convincing view; and I undertake the task the more willingly, as in the Preface to the first volume of this work, I laid myself under an obligation (several years ago) to attempt something of this kind, and have often been reminded of it by persons for whom I have the highest regard.

I then proposed to handle the subject in a few sermons, to be added to those, long since published, on the evidences of the gospel. But, on a review of that particular connection, which the argument I am here to pursue has with the History of the New Testament, I apprehend, it could no where appear better, than at the end of my Exposition on the books which contain it. The reader will, I hope, recollect, that, in the sermons just now mentioned, I have endeavoured to demonstrate the truth of that history; and every year convinces me more and more of the unanswerable force of the evidence there displayed. It is with great pleasure that I reflect on the divine blessing, which hath seemed to attend those discourses; and it is a great encouragement to me to hope, that what I am now to offer may be a means of establishing some of my readers in that regard to the sacred oracles, which will be their best preservative against the errors, and the vices, of that licentious age in which Providence has cast our lot, whereby our fidelity and our zeal are brought to a trial, which few ages but those of martyrdom could have afforded.

It will be my business, first, to state the nature of Inspiration in general, and of that kind of it, which (as I apprehend)
we are to ascribe to the New Testament: I shall then prove, that it was undoubtedly written by such inspiration; and after this, I shall briefly hint at the influence, which this important truth ought always to have upon our temper and conduct; by inferring which, I apprehend, I shall take the best method to promote a growing persuasion of the truth I am labouring to establish.

I will only premise, That I do not intend this, as a full discussion of the subject, but only as such a compendious view of the chief proofs, as may suit the place in which it stands, and as may, from the easiest and plainest principles, give rational satisfaction to the minds of common Christians, who have not leisure, nor perhaps ability, to enter into all the niceties of theological and scholastical controversy.

I. I shall state the nature of Inspiration, and of that kind of it, which we are to ascribe to the New Testament.

In this I shall be more particular, as I apprehend, the want of a sufficient accuracy here has occasioned some confusion in the reasoning of several worthy persons, who have treated this important subject more largely, than I must here allow myself to do. I shall not, however, criticise on their account of the matter, but plainly lay down what seems to me intelligible, right and safe.

By Inspiration in general, I would be understood to mean, "Any supernatural influence of God upon the mind of a rational creature, whereby it is formed to any degree of intellectual improvement, beyond what it would, at that time, and in those circumstances, have attained in a natural way, that is, by the usual exercise of its faculties, unassisted by any special divine interposition." Thus, if a man were instantaneously enabled to speak a language which he had never learned, how possible soever it might have been for him to have obtained an equal readiness in it by degrees, I believe few would scruple to say, that he owed his acquaintance with it to a divine inspiration; or, if he gave a true and exact account of what was doing at a distance, and published a particular relation of what he neither saw nor heard, as some of the prophets did, all the world would own, (if the affair were too complex, and the account too circumstantial, to be the result of a lucky guess,) that he must be inspired with the knowledge of it, though another account equally exact, given by a person on the spot, would be ascribed to no inspiration at all.

But of this supernatural influence on the minds of men, forming them to such extraordinary intellectual improvements and abilities, there are various sorts and degrees, which it will be of importance for us accurately to distinguish from each other.

If a person be discoursing either in word or writing, and God do miraculously watch over his mind, and, however secretly, direct it in such a manner, as to keep him more secure from error in what he speaks or writes, than he could have been merely by the
the natural exercise of his faculties, I should say, he was inspired, even though there should be no extraordinary marks of high genius in the work, or even though another person, with a stronger memory, or relating a fact more immediately after it happened, if there was in this case any thing miraculous, we must, on the principles above, allow an inspiration; and I would call this, to distinguish it from other and higher degrees, an inspiration of superintendency.

If this influence should act in such a degree, as absolutely to exclude all mixture of error in a declaration of doctrines or facts so superintended, we might then call it a plenary superintending inspiration, or, as I would choose for popular use to express myself in this discourse, a full inspiration.

Now it will from hence follow, (and I desire that it may be seriously attended to,) that a book, the contents of which are entirely true, may be said to be written by a full inspiration, even though it contain many things which the author might have known and recorded merely by the use of his natural faculties, if there be others which he did not so well know, or could not without miraculous assistance have so exactly recollected; or if, on the whole, a freedom from all error would not in fact have been found, unless God had thus superintended or watched over his mind and pen. And, in regard to such a production, it would be altogether impertinent and insignificant to enquire, how far did natural memory or natural reason operate, and in what particular facts or doctrines did supernatural agency prevail. It is enough, if I know that what the author says or writes is true, though I know not particularly how he came by this or that truth: for my obligation to receive it arises from its being known truth, and not merely from its being made known this or that way. And should God miraculously assure me, that any particular writing contained nothing but the truth; and should be at the same time tell me, though I could not then call it inspired, I should be as much obliged to receive and submit to it on its being thus attested by God, as if every single word had been immediately dictated by him.

It will farther follow from what is said above, that a book may be written by such full inspiration as I have described, though, the author being left to the choice of his own words, phrases, and manner, there may be some imperfection in the style and method, provided the whole contents of it are true: if the subject be so important, as to make it consistent with the divine wisdom miraculously to interpose, to preserve an entire credibility as to the exact truth of facts recorded, and doctrines delivered as divine.

* It is very evident, that the learned Maimonides thought this to be the case with regard to the prophets, though I think it least of all to be apprehended in such oracles. See Maimon. Mar. Nov. lib. ii. cap. 29.
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divine. If indeed God were represented as declaring such a book to be intended by him as an exact standard for logic, oratory, or poetry, every apparent defect in either would be an internal objection against it. But if it be represented only as intended to teach us truth, in order to its having a proper influence on our temper and actions, such defects would no more warrant or excuse our rejecting its authority, than the want of a ready utterance or a musical voice would excuse our disregard to a person, who should bring us competent evidence of his being a messenger from God to us.

I have been more particular in stating this kind of inspiration, because it is that which I shall endeavour to assert to the sacred books of the New Testament; and this without any exception or limitation, as they came out of the hands of the apostles: though I allow it is possible they may, in this or that particular copy, and in some minuter instances which now perhaps affect all our remaining copies, have suffered something by the injuries of time, or the negligence of transcribers, as well as printers: Which, that they have in some particulars suffered, is as notorious a fact, as that there is a written or a printed copy of them in the world; yet is at the same time a fact which no man of common sense or honesty can seriously urge against their authority.

Though it be the main point in my view, to prove that the New Testament is written under that kind of inspiration which I have been explaining, I must nevertheless beg leave to mention two other kinds, of which divines often speak, and which do also in a considerable degree belong to many parts of scripture, though I think it neither expedient, material, nor safe, to assert that they run through the whole of it: I mean, an inspiration of elevation, and of suggestion.

The former (as its name plainly intimates) prevails, where the faculties, though they act in a regular, and as it seems, a common manner, are nevertheless elevated or raised to some extraordinary degree, so that the performance is more truly sublime, noble, and pathetic, than what would have been produced merely by the force of a man’s natural genius. As for the particular degree of the divine agency, where there is indeed something of this inspiration, perhaps neither the person that is under it, nor any other creature, may be able confidently to pronounce concerning it. Perhaps, nothing less penetrating than the eye of God himself, may be able universally to distinguish that narrow line which divides what is natural from what is supernatural, in all the productions and powers of imagination, reasoning, and language, or in the effects and powers of memory under the former head. It is a curiosity, in the minute particulars of which we are not at all concerned; as it is the same God which, whether naturally or miraculously, worketh all and in all, (1 Cor. xii. 9.) But if any excellency in the performance itself can speak it to be more than human, productions of this sort are to be found in scripture;
scripture; and the rank and education of some of the sacred pen-men render the hand of God peculiarly conspicuous in the sublimity and lustre of their writings. What the gifts of the Spirit may in every age of the church have done, by operations of this kind, we know not. And I think it would be presumptuous absolutely to deny, that God might act in some extraordinary degree on some of the heathen writers, to produce those glorious works of antiquity which have been, under the direction of his Providence, so efficacious on the one hand to transmit the evidences of divine revelation, and on the other to illustrate the necessity of it: In consequence of which I cannot forbear saying by the way, that I think they who are intimately acquainted with them, are of all men upon earth the most inexcusable in rejecting Christianity. But our inability to mark out the exact boundaries between nature and an extraordinary divine agency, is not much to be regretted; since it does not appear to be the design of Providence, by such elevations of sentiment, style, and manner, by any means to bear testimony to the person adorned with them, as a messenger sent to speak in his name; which may as affectually be done in the plainest and simplest forms of expression, without any thing which looks like the heightenings of art, or the sparklings of an extraordinary genius.

The other, which divines have called immediate suggestion, is the highest and most extraordinary kind of inspiration, and takes place when the use of our faculties is superseded, and God does as it were speak directly to the mind; making such discoveries to it as it could not otherwise have obtained, and dictating the very words in which these discoveries are to be communicated to others: So that a person, in what he writes from hence, is no other than, first, the auditor, and then (if I may be allowed the expression) the secretary of God; as John was of our Lord Jesus Christ, when he wrote from his sacred lips the seven epistles to the Asiatic churches. And it is, no doubt, to an inspiration of this kind that the book of the Revelation owes its original.

It is evident from the definitions above, that there may be a full superintendency where neither of the latter kinds of inspiration (of elevation or suggestion) take place: But I think we must necessarily allow, that an inspiration of suggestion, so far as it goes, must also imply a full superintendency in recording the history of what has been seen or heard in any prophetic vision, when it is necessary to make a report of it. For as it would, on the one hand, be impious to imagine, that the blessed God would dictate a falsehood to any of his creatures; so neither can we suppose it consistent with the divine wisdom, to suffer the prophet, through infirmity, to err in delivering a message with which he had expressly charged him; and which would be given in vain, so far as there was a failure in the exact delivery of it.

Besides the last book of the New Testament, I mean the Revelation, which I have already mentioned in this view, it seems evident to me that some other parts of it were given by such a suggestion;
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gestion; seeing there are so many predictions interspersed, and so
many mysteries revealed, which lay entirely beyond the ken of any
human, or perhaps angelic mind. But that this is applicable to all
the history of it, or to all things contained in its epistolary parts. I
choose not to assert. For as it cannot be necessary to its entire
credibility (which nothing can more affectually secure than a full
superintendency) it would subject us to many difficulties, which
have been so forcibly urged by others, that it is not necessary for
me here to repeat them. But I am well assured, that the apparent
insufficiency of the answers which have been returned to these
objections, by some very sincere, but I think in this instance, less
judicious defenders of scripture, has led some people to conclude,
that the scripture was not inspired at all; as if it had been on both
sides agreed, that an universal suggestion was the only kind of
inspiration worth contending about. The consequence of this
 hath been, that such as are dissatisfied with the arguments which
these defenders of the divine authority of the scripture insist upon,
read the scriptures (if they read them at all,) not to learn their
authentic dictates, but to try the sentiments contained in them by
the touch-stone of their own reason, and to separate what that shall
allow to be right from what it presumptuously concludes to be
wrong. And this boasted standard has been so very defective, that
on this mistaken notion they have not only rejected many of the
most vital truths of Christianity but even some essential principles
of natural religion. And thus they have in effect annihilated the
Christian revelation, at the very same time that they have acknow-
ledged the historical truth of the facts on which it is built. This
is the body of men, that have affected to call themselves cautious
believers; but their character is so admirably well described
under that of Agrippa, by my honoured friend Dr. Watts, in his
little treatise called the Redeemer and Sanctifier, that it may be
sufficient here to have hinted it thus briefly; as the reason, why
out of regard to them as well as others, I have resumed the
subject of inspiration, and endeavoured to place it in what I do
in my conscience apprehend to be both a safe and a rational
light.

That I may remedy, so far as God shall enable me to do it, the
great and destructive evil I have just been mentioning, and may
establish in the minds of Christians a due regard to the sacred
oracles of eternal truth, I shall now proceed to the second part of
this discourse: In which,

II. I am to shew, how evidently the full inspiration of the New
Testament, in the sense stated above, follows from the ac-
knowledged truth of the history which it contains, in all its
leading and most important facts.

But before I proceed to the discussion of the matter, I must
beg leave to observe, that though this is what I apprehend to be
the grand argument, and that which may most properly be con-
ected
nected with an exposition of the historical books, I am very far from slighting those other arguments which fall not so directly in my way here.

I greatly revere the testimony of the primitive Christian writers, not only to the real existence of the sacred books in those early ages, but also to their divine original: Their persuasion of which most evidently appears from the veneration with which they speak of them, even while miraculous gifts remained in the church; and consequently, an exact attendance to a written rule might seem less absolutely necessary, and the authority of inferior teachers might approach nearer to that of the apostles. I believe every candid reader will acknowledge, that nothing can be objected to many strong passages in Clemens Romanus, Polycarp, Justin Martyr, Irenæus, Theophilus Antiochenus, Clemens Alexandrinus, Tertullian, Origen, Eusebius, and some other ancient writers he has mentioned that are now lost. It is needless to produce them here, after those valuable specimens of them which Dr. Whitby and Mons. du Pin have given; and especially considering what my learned friend Dr. Lardner has with so much industry and accuracy of judgment collected on this head in the second part of his Credibility of the Gospel History. I shall therefore content myself with observing here, that several of the most learned and considerable of these ancients speak of this veneration for the sacred writings of the New Testament, not as the result of their own private judgment, but as that in which all the churches were unanimously agreed.

The internal characters of divine inspiration, with which every page of the New Testament abounds, do also deserve our attentive notice; and render the book itself, if considered as detached from all external evidence whatsoever, a compendious demonstration of its own sacred original, and consequently of the certainty of that religion which it teaches. The excellency of its doctrines, the spirituality and elevation of its design, the majesty and simplicity of its style, the agreement of its part in the most unsuspicious manner, with its more than human efficacy on the hearts and consciences of men, do all concur to give us a very high

* Thus Origen says, (Philocal. cap. xii p. 41) ηυ σέ...κινδους πνευματικος...δι των πρωτον και των γενεσεων, "That, if a man would not confess himself to be an infidel, he must admit the inspiration of the scriptures." And he elsewhere places the gospels in the number of writings, "which were received as divine by all the churches of God, and were the elements, or first principles, of the church's faith: Ει πισεως εκλαθεις Εκει παντα εις την εκλαθειν των πνευματων..." Tertullian also lays it down as a fundamental principle in disputing with heretics, "That the truth of doctrines is to be determined by scripture?" for the question has evidently the force of a strong negation: Alinnde scilicet logi posunt de rebus fidei, nisi ex litteris fidei? (de Præscript. Hebr. cap. xxv.) And Eusebius quotes a much more ancient writer than himself, (Euseb. Eccl., Hist. lib. v. cap. 28.) who calls the scripture, "πειρατες ὁμογενει περιουσια, "the rule of ancient faith." and who afterwards speaking of heretics, declares, "That, if they denied the scriptures to be divinely inspired, they were infidels." The expression is remarkable; but, having transcribed it in Vol. I. p. 27, note, I shall not insert it here.
high idea of the New Testament: And I am persuaded, that the wiser and better any man is, and the more familiarly he converses with these unequalled books, the more will he be struck with this evidence. But these things in the general are better felt than expressed, and several of the arguments arise not from particular passages, but from the general tenor of the books; and consequently they cannot be judged of but by a serious and attentive perusal.

Dismissing therefore these topics, not with neglect but with the sincerest expressions of just and high veneration, I now proceed to that grand proof of the inspiration of the New Testament, which is derived from the credibility of its leading facts; which having so fully illustrated in the sermons referred to above, I think I have a just title to assume as the foundation of what farther reasonings may occur.

Admitting this great principle, it is undeniably certain, . . . That Jesus of Nazareth was a most extraordinary person:—That after having been foretold by many prophets in distant periods of time he was at length, agreeably to the repeated declaration of an angel, first to a priest ministering at the golden altar in the temple, and then to his mother, conceived by a virgin of David's family: —That his birth was proclaimed by a choir of angels, who celebrated it in celestial anthems, as the foundation of peace on earth, and the most glorious display of divine benevolence to men: —That before his public appearance, a person greater than any of the prophets, and whose birth had also been foretold by an angel, was sent to prepare the way: —That, on his being baptized, he was anointed with a wonderful effusion of the Spirit poured down upon him by a visible symbol; and that the efficacy of this sacred agent, continually residing in him, was apparent throughout the whole course of his ministry, not only in the unsotted sanctity of his life, amidst a thousand most violent temptations, and in the bright assemblage of virtues and graces which shone in it, with a lustre before unknown, and since absolutely unparalleled; but also in a multitude of various works of wonder and mercy, which he miraculously wrought on those whose diseases were of the most desperate and incurable nature, and even on the dead, whom that Almighty voice of his, which had driven out the fiercest infernal spirits, and calmed the rage of tempests, did with serene majesty awaken into life, as from a slumber.—It is also on the same foundation certain, That this illustrious person, having by the malice of his enemies been most unjustly and cruelly put to death, did on the third day arise from the dead: —And that, after having given to his disciples the most abundant proofs of that important fact, he at length ascended to heaven gradually in their sight; angels appearing to assure them, he should as visibly descend from thence to the universal judgment, the administration of which he had declared to be committed to him.

I must
I must freely declare, that had I been an entire stranger to the sacred history, and proceeded no farther in it than this, supposing me firmly to have believed all these wonderful things, though delivered in the shortest abstract that could have been made of them,) I should readily have concluded, that this extraordinary person, being sent (as it plainly appears from the history that he was) with a divine revelation for the benefit of all nations and of all ages, had taken care to leave some authentic records of the doctrine which he taught. And if I had farther found, that he had left no such records written by himself, I should naturally have concluded, that he took effectual care that some of his followers should be enabled to deliver down to posterity the system of religion which he taught in the most accurate manner; with all such extraordinary assistance from God as the nature of the subject required, in order to rendering their accounts exact. And I believe every reasonable man would draw this inference; because it is very apparent that the great end of this vast and astonishing apparatus, (for vast and astonishing it would appear, if what relates to Jesus alone were taken into the survey,) must in the nature of things be frustrated, if no such records were provided; it being morally impossible that unwritten tradition should convey a system of religion pure and uncorrupted, even to the next generation; and much more, that it should so convey it to the end of time. And it would seem, so far as we can judge, by no means worthy the divine wisdom to suffer the good effects of such a great and noble plan to be lost for want of so easy an expedient; especially since men of the age and country in which these things happened, were not only blessed with the use of letters, but were remarkable for their application to them, and for great proficiency in various branches of learning. And if I should not only have an abstract of this history of Jesus, which I judged credible, but should also be so happy as to have the Four Gospels in my hand, with convincing evidences of their being genuine, (which we here suppose,) I should on these principles assuredly argue, That not only the leading facts, but likewise the system of doctrines and discourses delivered in them, might entirely be depended upon: Nor could I conceive the truth of such doctrines and discourses to be separable from the general truth of the leading facts referred to above; having (as I here suppose) proper evidences to convince me, that the penmen of these books were the persons by whom the memory of these events was to be delivered down to posterity; which is a farther principle that none of common sense and modesty can pretend to contest; none appearing as their competitors whose pretensions are worthy to be named.

But my apprehension of the full authenteness and credibility of these writers would, on the supposition I am here making greatly increase, as I proceeded to that excellent and useful book which the good providence of God has now given me an oppor-
tunity of illustrating; the Acts of the holy Apostles; since I learn from thence, that in a very few days after the ascension of Jesus into heaven, the Spirit of God was, according to his promise, poured out upon his apostles in an abundant manner, attended with the visible appearance of a lambent celestial flame; and that, in consequence of this amazing union, the poor fishermen of Galilee, and their companions, were in a moment enabled to speak, with the greatest readiness and propriety, Latin, Greek, Arabic, Coptic, Persic, and a variety of other languages, the first rudiments of which they had never learnt, and also to perform all kinds of miracles, equal to those of their Master, and in some circumstances superior to them. My veneration for the writings of these men (and I here suppose, I know those of the New Testament to be so,) must be unparalleled, when I think who and what they were; and I am so struck with this plain, but divinely powerful argument, that I must entreat my reader to review with me, a little more particularly, some of the actions and circumstances of these holy men, to whose writings I am labouring to conciliate his unreserved regard.

Let them all be considered, as preaching the gospel in that extraordinary manner on the day of Pentecost, and a few days after when some of their companions had been seized and threatened by the Sanhedrim, as anointed again with such an effusion of the Spirit, as shook the very house in which they were, and inspired them all at once with the same sublime hymn of praise. Let them be considered, as afterwards led out of the prison by an angel, and commanded by him to go and preach the gospel in the temple, under the remarkable phraseology of the words of this life, as if the whole life and happiness of the human race depended on their knowing and receiving it. Nor let us here forget that extraordinary power, common to all the apostles, of communicating the miraculous gifts of the Spirit by the imposition of their hands. Had we nothing particular to say of any one, more than these grand things which we hear of them all, it must surely command our reverence to these writings, and set them at a vast distance from any of merely human original.

But through the singular providence of God it hath so happened, that we have the most particular history of the lives of those apostles, to whose writings we are generally most indebted; I mean, John, Peter, and Paul.

With respect to John we know, that besides the concern he had in the cure of the lame man, he was favoured with the visions of God in the Isle of Patmos, where our Lord, after an abode of more than half a century on the throne of his glory at his Father's right hand; did him the unequalled honour to use him as his amanuensis or secretary, expressly dictating to him the letters he was pleased to send to the seven churches in Asia. How easily then may we suppose him to have presided over his other writings, as to have secured him from mistakes in them!

Consider Peter, as striking Ananias and Sapphira dead with a word;
word; as curing, by the like powerful word, one cripple at Jerusalem and another at Lydda, and calling back Dorcas even from the dead. Let us view him in that grand circumstance, of being marked out so particularly by an angel to Cornelius, and sent to him as the oracle of God himself; from whom that worthy and honourable person was to hear words by which he and all his house should be saved; and after this let us view him, as once more delivered out of the hand of Herod, and from all the expectation of the people of the Jews, by an angel, who struck off his chains, and opened the doors of his prison the very night before he was to have been executed. And let any one, with these particulars in his eye, added to the foregoing in which he shared with all his brethren, say, what more could be necessary to prove the divine inspiration of what he taught, so far as inspiration was requisite to render it entirely authentic; or let any one farther say, upon what imaginable pretence the authority of his writings can be denied, if that of his preaching be granted.

And to mention no more, let Paul, that great scribe instructed in the kingdom of heaven, to whose pen we owe so many invaluable epistles be considered in the same view; and let us endeavour to impress our minds with the various scenes through which we know he passed, and the distinguished favours with which his Master honoured him, that we may judge, how we are to receive the instructions of his pen. Let us therefore think of him, as so miraculously called by the voice of Christ to the profession of his gospel, when he was persecuting it even to the death; as receiving a full and distinct revelation of that glorious, but to him quite unknown gospel, by the immediate inspiration of its divine author, which is a fact he expressly witnesses, and in which he could not possibly be mistaken. Think of the lustre of those astonishing works which shone round him wherever he went, and of those wrought in his favour, which showed him so eminently the care of Heaven; demons ejected; distempers cured, sometimes with a touch, and sometimes without, by a garment sent from him to the patient; his motions guided from place to place by a divine oracle; Elymas struck blind for opposing him; his hands loosed by an earthquake; his strength and vigour instantaneously restored, when the rage of the mutable and barbarous populace at Lystra had stoned him and left him for dead; and to add no more, his safety in a shipwreck, with that of near three hundred more in the same vessel for his sake, promised by an angel, and accomplished without the loss of a single person, when they had expected nothing but an universal ruin. Let us, I say, think of Paul in these circumstances; and with these facts full in our view, let us judge, whether it is at all probable, yea, whether it be morally possible, that a man, sent out and attended with such credentials as these, should be so left of God, amidst all these tokens of his constant care, as to mingle error with sound doctrine, and his own fancies with the divine revelations, which we are sure he received; or whether, if he were not left to such effects of human frailty
frailty in his preaching, but might have been regarded by his hearers with entire credit, he would be left to them in those writings, by which he was (as it were) to preach to all future generations of men from one end of the world to the other, and by which, being dead, he yet speaketh, in all languages, and to all Christian assemblies.

I cannot forbear thinking this plain argument, so well adapted to popular use, abundantly sufficient to carry conviction to every candid mind, in proportion to the degree of its attention and penetration. And I am almost afraid, that some should think I have bestowed an unnecessary labour, thus particularly to state a matter, which hath such a flood of light poured in upon it from almost every page of the sacred story. But I have been obliged, in the course of this exposition, to meditate much on these facts; and under the deep impression I could not but speak, as out of the fullness of my heart.

Yet after all I have already said, I should be very unjust to this argument, if I did not endeavour to represent to my reader, how much it is strengthened on the one hand by the express and comprehensive promises which our Redeemer made to his apostles, and on the other by the peculiar language in which the apostles themselves speak of their preaching and writings, and the high regard they challenge to each; a regard, which nothing could justify them in demanding, but a consciousness that they were indeed under a full inspiration.

The promises of our Lord Jesus Christ must undoubtedly have a very great weight with all that have reflected on that indisputable testimony, which God himself bore to him in numberless instances. And therefore, though they are so very well known, I must beg leave not only to refer to them, but to recite the chief of them at large; and I entreat the reader to consider, how he can reconcile them with an apprehension, that our Lord Jesus Christ did at the same time intend to leave the persons to whom he made such promises, liable to mistake both in facts and doctrines, and, being deceived themselves, to mislead such as should depend upon their testimony, where they professed themselves to be thoroughly informed.

In that copious and excellent discourse, which our Lord addressed to the apostles, just before he quitted the guest chamber to go to the garden of Gethsemane, (that is, but a few hours before his death,) the grand consolation he urges to his sorrowful disciples is this, that he would send his spirit upon them. The donation of which Spirit is represented, as the first fruits of Christ's intercession, when after so long an absence, and such terrible sufferings, he should be restored to his father's embraces. This is spoken of as the first petition preferred by him, and the first favour granted to his church for his sake; (John xiv. 16.) I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may
may abide with you for ever. Yea, Christ declares, and he could not be mistaken in it, that the agency of his Spirit should so abundantly counterbalance, all the advantages they received from his bodily presence, that, strong as their affection to him was, they would in that view have reason to rejoice in his leaving them: (John xvi. 7) I tell you the truth, that is, I say what may be depended upon as a most important certainty, (and very important indeed such a representation was: it is expedient for you that I go away, for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. Now from these expressions, were they alone, I think we might probably infer, that the apostles, after having received the Spirit, would be in no more danger of erring in their writings, than they would have been, if Jesus himself, had been always near them, to inform them concerning any fact or doctrine, of which they might have occasion to speak.

This is farther confirmed by the title which is given him no less that thrice in this discourse, the Spirit of truth, almost in a breath with these great and weighty circumstances, that he should abide with them for ever; (John xiv. 16, 17.) that he should guide them into all truth; that he should teach them all things, yea and shew them things to come; (John xvi. 13,) which must surely secure them from any danger of erring in relating things that were past. But, lest any should be perverse enough to dispute the consequence, our Lord particularly mentions this effect of the Spirit’s operation, that they should thereby be fitted to bear a testimony to him, as those who had long been conversant with him, and whose memories were miraculously assisted in recollecting those discourses, which they had heard from him: (John xv. 26, 27.) When the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me; and ye also (being so assisted) shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning. And again (John xiv. 26.) The Holy Ghost shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

Soon after this our Lord, on the very day in which he rose from the dead, in a dependance on the aids of this promised Spirit, gives them a commission, which nothing but its plenary inspiration could have answered, or have qualified them to fulfil; for coming to them, he declares, (John xx. 21.) As my Father hath sent me, even so, send I you: And upon this he breathed upon them, and said, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted: and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained; which, whether it signifies a power of inflicting and removing miraculous punishments or of authoritatively declaring that sins were in particular instances forgiven or retained, must either suppose such a constant presence of Christ with them, as it is hard, or rather impossible, to reconcile with supposing them to err
err in what they wrote for the instruction of the church in succeeding ages.

These are the grand passages, on which I rest this part of the argument; yet I think, I ought not to omit those, in which Christ promises them such extraordinary assistance of the Spirit, while defending his cause in the presence of magistrates; and it is the more proper to mention them, as the language in which they are made is so remarkable. On this occasion then he tells them, (Mat. x. 20.) When they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak, for it shall be given you in the same hour what ye shall speak, for it is not you that speak, but the Spirit of your Father that speaketh in you. May we not therefore on the same principles conclude, that, when they were to write for the use of all future generations of Christians, it was not so much they who wrote as the Spirit of the Father, who in effect wrote by them, and as it were dictated to them? For the occasion will surely appear as important in one instance as in the other; or rather much more important in the latter than in the former, as an error in their writings would have a much more extensive and lasting influence, than a slip of their tongues in a transient pleading before a magistrate. Nay, to give this argument the greatest possible weight, we find that the same promise was made, almost in the very same words, (Luke xii. 11, 12.) to persons in the dignity of their office inferior to the apostles; I mean, to the seventy, which might have intitled their writings to such a regard, as I am now labouring to engage to those of their superiors.

I shall only farther remind the reader, that our Lord, when just ascending to heaven, refers to that effusion of Spirit which was quickly after to happen, even before they departed from Jerusalem, as the era, from whence the grand accomplishment of the promises relating to the aids of the Spirit was to be dated. (See Luke xxiv. 49. Acts i. 4, 5. And, as all the apostolical writings which now remain were written several years after that event, it plainly proves, they lie within the period, in which they were to expect all the assurance which these promises import.

The most plausible objection, which can be urged against the application of these promises to the matter now before us, is this: “That these promises only refer to the supernatural assistance, granted to the apostles on great and pressing occasions; but that they might easily, without such assistance, have written a true account of the life and preaching of Christ, and of such other facts as they record, and consequently that their historical writings at least, how credible soever we suppose them, might be drawn up without any inspiration at all.”

To this I might reply, that if it be allowed that the apostles, in the books which we have been endeavouring to explain, wrote the exact truth, and that in their epistles they have made a right and unerring representation of the revelation with which they were charged, so that we may safely make their writings a rule both of faith
faith and practice, the remaining question would only be about the propriety of using the word inspiration when speaking of them; and therefore would, on the principles I have laid down above, be comparatively of small importance. Yet I think it easy, in that view of the question, to prove that these writings could not have been thus entirely credible, if they had not been written under such a full inspiration of superintendency, as is stated in the first part of this discourse.

I do indeed allow, and no candid man can dispute it, that the penmen of the New Testament, supposing them able to write at all, might merely by the natural exercise of their memory, under the direction of the common sense and reason of men, have given us a plain, faithful, and very easy account of many extraordinary scenes, to which they had been witnesses during the time they conversed with Jesus on earth, and in which they were active after his ascension. And I cannot forbear saying, that supposing the truth of the grand leading facts, (as that Jesus of Nazareth taught a doctrine confirmed by miracles, and was himself raised from the dead,) I should have esteemed such writings, supposing them merely an honest account of what such men must have known, to be beyond all comparison the most valuable records of antiquity. But, when these writings came to be perused, it is evident to me from the particular contents of them, that honest and worthy men would never have pretended to have written in such a manner, if they had not been conscious of superior direction, and extraordinary divine influence.

For the historians of whom we speak do not merely give us a very circumstantial account of actions, as what journeys Christ made, what miracles he performed, in what manner he was received, where and how he died, and rose again, and ascended into heaven; but they do also, as we may reasonably expect they should, give us an account of the doctrine he taught, and indeed, if they had not done this, the knowledge of his story, amazing as it is, would have been but an unprofitable amusement to us. Nor do they content themselves with giving us a short summary of his doctrine, or a view of the religion he intended to introduce, as the general result of their having attended so long on his instructions; but they presume to tell us his very words. And here, they do not merely relate some short saying, the remarkable poignancy of which, or their propriety to the circumstances in which they were spoken, might have struck the memory with a peculiar force; but they insert long discourses, which he made on public occasions, though they do not pretend, that he left any copies of them, or that they themselves took from them any written memoirs, whatsoever; and it is worth our notice, that (besides the many shorter sayings and replies with which the history is interspersed) near one half of the four gospels is taken up with the insertion of these discourses*.

* If my computation does not deceive me, 93 of our 203 sections are taken up thus; and some of them are long sections too: and, the number of verses contained in these discourses,
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Now it was highly necessary, that, if these speeches of the Lord were recorded at all, they should be recorded with great exactness; for many of them relate to the system of doctrines which he came to teach, and others of them are predictions of future events, referring to a great variety of curious circumstances, where a small mistake might greatly have affected the credit of the prediction, and with it the cause of Christianity in general: so that common prudence would have taught the apostles to wave them, rather than pretend to deliver them to posterity, if they had not been sure they could have done it exactly.

But how could they have expected to have done this, merely by the natural strength of their own memories, unless we imagine each of them to be a prodigy in that respect, to which no one of them makes the least shadow of a pretence? It is well known, that several of those speeches of Christ which Matthew and John give us, (not now to mention the other evangelists,) contain several pages, and some of them cannot be deliberately and decently read over in less than a quarter of an hour. Now I believe, if my reader would make the experiment on any thing of that length which he read or heard yesterday, or even on one of those discourses of Christ, though perhaps he has read or heard it an hundred times, he would find, on a careful examination, many things would probably be omitted; many transposed; many expressed in a different manner; and were he to write a copy of such a discourse from his memory, and then critically to compare it with the original, he would find the sense, in many particulars where there was some general resemblance, more different than he could perhaps have imagined; and variations, which at first seemed but inconsiderable, would appear greatly to affect the sense, when they came to be more nicely renewed. If this would so probably be the case with ninety-nine out of a hundred of mankind, (and I certainly speak within compass,) when a discourse to be repeated had been delivered but a day or an hour before, what could be expected from the apostles with an interval of so many years, and especially from John, who has, in proportion to the length of his gospel, recorded more speeches than any of the rest, and wrote them (if we may credit the most authentic tradition,) more than half a century after our Lord's ascension?

This argument would have great weight, with relation to a man whose life was ever so peaceful, and his affairs contracted in the narrowest sphere: But it will be greatly strengthened, when we come to consider the multitude and variety of scenes, and those too the most interesting than can be imagined, through which the apostles passed. When we consider all their labours, and their cares; the journeys they were continually taking; the novelty of objects perpetually surrounding them; and, above all, the persecutions and dangers to which they were daily exposed; and the strong
strong manner in which the mind is struck, and the memory of past circumstances erased, by such occurrences; I cannot conceive that any reader will be so unreasonable, as to imagine these things could have been written with any exactness by the apostles, if they had not been miraculously assisted in recording them. And what is particularly mentioned by the last of these writers, of the promised agency of the Spirit to bring to their remembrance all things they had heard from Christ himself, (John xiv. 26.) must I think incontestably prove that this was one purpose for which the Spirit was given; and therefore, we may be sure that it was a purpose for which it was needed.

I hope I have by this time convinced my reader, that it is agreeable to the other circumstances of the apostle's story, and to the promises which our Lord so largely and so frequently made to them, (and the frequent repetition of the promise strongly intimates the importance of it,) to suppose that they were indeed favoured with a full inspiration in their writings.

But, to complete the argument, it must be observed, That these holy men (for such the history plainly shews them to have been) assume to themselves such an authority, and speak of their own discourses and writings in such peculiar language, as nothing but a consciousness of such inspiration could warrant, or even excuse.

To make us duly sensible of the force of this argument, let us hear Paul, Peter, and John, and we shall find the remark applicable to them all; though, as St. Paul wrote much more than either of the latter, we may naturally expect to find the most frequent instances of it in his writings.

When the apostle Paul had taken notice to the Corinthians, that the subject of his preaching was the wisdom of God in a mystery, and related to things which transcended the sense and imagination of men, he adds (1 Cor. ii. 10.) But God hath revealed them to us by the Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, even the deep things of God: And again, (ver. 12.) We have received, not the Spirit of the world, so as to act in that artful way which a regard to secular advantages dictates; but the Spirit which is of God, that we may know the things that are freely given us of God. Now, it is natural to conclude from hence, that this knowledge being given them not merely or chiefly for themselves, but for the church, (in which view they speak of themselves and their office as the gift of God to the church; compare Eph. iv. 11, 12; and 1 Cor. iii. 21—23.) they should be assisted to communicate it in a proper manner; since otherwise the end of God in giving it to them would be frustrated. But the apostle does not content himself with barely suggesting this, but he asserts in the most express terms; (1 Cor. ii. 13.) Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, that is, not with a vain ostentation of human eloquence, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual, or, as some would render
render and paraphrase it, adapting spiritual expressions to spiritual things.* And in the close of the chapter, when with a noble freedom, in a consciousness of the distinguished character he bore, he puts the question to the whole world besides; Who hath known the mind of the Lord? he adds, But we have the mind of Christ. Which last clause plainly determines the sense in which we are to take those words at the close of chap. vii. And I think also that I have the Spirit of God†; that is, “I certainly appear to have it;” or, “it is evident and apparent, that my pretences to it are not a vain boast.” For, after having so expressly asserted it just above, none can imagine he meant here to insinuate, that he was uncertain whether he had it or not. He appeals therefore to those whose gifts were most eminent, to dispute it if they could: (1 Cor. xiv. 37.) If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, that is, if he have ever so good evidence that he really is so, (for it cannot be thought he meant to appear only to those who falsely pretended to these endowments) let him acknowledge that the things which I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord.—In his Second Epistle to the Corinthians, (chap. ii. 10.) he speaks of forgiving offenders in the person of Christ; and, amidst the humblest acknowledgments of his own insufficiency, boasts a sufficiency of God, who had made him an able minister of the New Testament. (2 Cor. iii. 5, 6.) Of which he was so thoroughly sensible, that in the first epistle which he ever wrote (so far as scripture informs us) to any of the churches, I mean, his First Epistle to the Thessalonians he, ventures to say, (chap. iv. 8.) he that despiseth, that is, (as the context plainly implies,) he that despiseth or rejecteth what I now write, despiseth not man, only or chiefly, but God, who hath given us his Holy Spirit: Which manifestly intimates, that what he wrote was under supernatural divine guidance and influence; as in the second verse of that chapter he had spoken of commandments which he had given them by the Lord Jesus Christ, just as he afterwards declared to the Corinthians, (2 Cor. xiii. 3.) how well he was able to give proofs of Christ’s speaking in him.—In his Epistle to the Galatians, the apostle solemnly assures them, (Gal. i. 11, 12,) that the gospel which he had preached among them was not after man, that is, not of any human original; and he gives this substantial proof of it, that he was himself taught it, no otherwise than by the immediate revelation of Jesus Christ. Agreeably to which assertion, when he gives the Corinthians an account of the institution and design of the Lord’s supper, he says in so many words, (1 Cor. xi. 13,) that he had received of the Lord what he had delivered unto them; that is, that he had his notion of that sacrament, and of the actions and words of Christ on which it was founded, by an immediate inspiration from him, or in the language we have used above, by suggestion. And he speaks of

* ἠπομακρύνας πνευματική στοιχείωσις.
† Ἀλλὰ ἐν κατά Ἱησοῦ Ὑπερέχει Θεῷ τῷ χριστίν.
of his brethren, as well as of himself, in these terms, (Eph. iii. 3, 5,) that the mystery of Christ which was before unknown, that is, the right of the Gentiles, on believing the gospel, to full communion with the Christian church, was made known to the holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit, and not merely by the natural recollection of what they had heard Christ say, or by their own reasonings upon it.

Most agreeable to this is the strain of Peter, who in one epistle joins the commandments of the apostles with the words of the holy prophets: (2 Pet. iii. 12) and mentions the epistles of Paul with other scriptures, (ver. 15, 16,) no doubt in allusion to the sacred oracles of the Old Testament, which so generally went by that name. And in his other epistle he insists strenuously upon it, that the gospel was preached with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, in exact conformity to the prophetic oracles of former ages, not understood by those who uttered them; a circumstance, in this connection, highly worthy of our remark: And he seems strongly to intimate, that the angels themselves did by these apostolical preachings learn some things which, with all their superior faculties, they did not before so fully know: Which things, says he, the angels desire to look into. (1 Pet. i 12.) As Paul had also said, that to the principalities and powers in heavenly places was made known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, Eph. iii. 10.

To conclude this argument, St. John, remarkable as he was for his singular modesty and ingenuousness of temper, does not only tell us, that Jesus Christ shewed him the revelation, (Rev. i. 1.) but speaks in his epistle of an union poured out from the Holy One, by which they knew all things. (1 John ii. 20.) And in another passage he in effect asserts, that he had, in concurrence with his brethren, given such abundant proof of his being under a divine influence and direction in his teaching, whether by word or letter, that an agreement or disagreement with his doctrine was to be made the standard by which they might judge of truth or error, and obedience or disobedience to his injunctions the test of a good or a bad man; which is considerably more than merely asserting the fullest inspiration. (1 John iv. 6.) We are of God: He that knoweth God, heareth us; he that is not of God, heareth not us; hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error.

I might here add, if it were necessary, the several passages of the New Testament in which the gospel preached by the apostles is called the gospel of God; (such as 2 Cor. xi. 7; 1 Tim. i. 11, and the like:) But I omit them, as the stress of the controversy does undoubtedly rest on these I have mentioned; and the importance of the question must be my defence, for so large an enumeration of texts which are so well known.

I shall only remind my reader, in a few words, of those many passages in which the gospel, as preached by the apostles, is so evidently equalled with, yea and preferred to, the law given by Moses, and the messages brought to the Jews by the succeeding prophets. These afford a further illustration of this argument, which
which will appear with very considerable weight, when we reflect on the high opinion they had of the Old Testament, and the honourable terms in which they speak of it, as the word and oracles of God, (Rom. iii. 2,) as given by his inspiration, (2 Tim. iii. 16.) and as that which holy men spake as they were moved, or borne on [φημον] by the Holy Ghost. (2 Pet. i. 21.) None can fail of observing, that they quote its authority on all occasions as decisive; yea, our Lord himself strongly intimates, not only the strict truth of the whole, but (which is much more) that it were intolerable to suppose it chargeable with any impropriety of expression; for this must be the sense of these remarkable words, (John x. 35,) that the scripture cannot be broken; and the whole force of our Lord's argument depends upon interpreting them thus. I might argue at large the improbability, and indeed the great absurdity of supposing, that such assistance were given to Moses and the prophets, as to make their writings so infallible a rule of faith and practice, and that the subjects of God's only begotten Son, and the grand minister in his kingdom, should be left destitute of equal assistance in their work and writings. I think the argument would be unanswerable, if considered apart: But I now mention it in another view, as illustrating the persuasion the apostles had of their own inspiration, when they speak of their teachings and decisions as equally authentic with those of the illustrious prophets, for whom they had so great and so just a regard.

I am fully satisfied that this last argument, from the manner in which the apostles speak of themselves in their writings, will strike the reader in proportion to the degree in which he reflects upon the true character of those excellent men, and especially upon that modesty and humility in which they bore so bright and so lovely a resemblance of their divine Master. Let him ask himself, what he would think of any minister of Christ now, supposing him ever so eminent for learning, wisdom, and piety, that should assume to himself such an authority? Suppose such a man, under the influence of no miraculous guidance, to say, not with reference to what he might quote from others, but with regard to his own dictates, "The things which I write unto you, are the commandments of the Lord: He that despiseth, despiseth not man, but God: We have the mind of Christ; and he that heareth not us, that receiveth not our dictates in religion, is not of God: Suppose, I say, such language as this to be used publicly by any Christian minister now on earth, and you must necessarily suppose his character from that very hour overthrown. The whole world would immediately join in loudly demanding miraculous proofs to verify such assertions; or in condemning, with just indignation, such a claim unsupported by them, as unpardonable lording it over men's faith and conscience, and thrusting themselves into their Master's throne. Let us not then charge the holy apostles with a conduct, of which we should not suspect any wise and good man now upon the face of the earth; and which if we saw
saw in any of our friends, our charity and respect for them would incline us to inquire after some marks of lunacy in them, as its best excuse.

I have now given an easy and popular view of the principal arguments for the inspiration of the New Testament*, on which my own faith in that important doctrine rests; and such an one as I hope by the divine blessing may be useful to others. I shall not enter into a particular consideration of the several objections against it, which chiefly arise from texts of scripture, in which some pretend to find, that the apostles were actually mistaken. I have considered most of these objections already, in my notes on the texts from whence they are taken: For almost all of them relate to passages in the historical books, and I do not know that I have omitted any of them; but have everywhere given (though as briefly as I could) such solutions as appeared to me in conscience satisfactory, though I have not stood formally to discuss them as objections against the inspiration of those books.

The reader will observe, that very few instances have occurred, in which I have judged it necessary to allow an error in our present copies: But as in those few instances the supposed change of a word or two makes the matter perfectly easy, I think it most respectfully to the sacred writings to account for the seeming difficulty thus, and to impute it to the transcribers: (though it is certain some of these mistakes, supposing them such, did happen very early; because, as Mr. Seed very properly expresses it in his excellent sermon on this subject†, (which, since I wrote the former part of this dissertation, fell in my hands), "a partial inspiration is to all intents and purposes no inspiration at all: "For," as he justly argues against the supposition of any mixture of error in these sacred writings, "mankind would be as much embarrassed to know what was inspired, and what was not, as they could be to collect a religion for themselves; the consequence of which would be, that we are left just where we were, and that God put himself to a great expence of miracles to effect nothing at all: A consequence highly derogatory and injurious to his honour."

The arguments brought from a few passages in the epistles, to prove that the apostles did not think themselves inspired, weak as they are, will be considered, if God permit, in their proper places. At present I shall content myself with referring the reader to Dr. Whitby, who I think has given a satisfactory solution to them all.

There are other objections of a quite different class, with which

* I was desired by a friend, for whose piety and good sense I have a very great regard, to add a note here on the inspiration of the Old Testament; but as it would require a large one, and might perhaps interrupt the reader, I choose to throw it into a Postscript at the end of this Dissertation.
† See Mr. Seed's Sermon, Vol. II. p. 302.
A Dissertation on the Inspiration of the New Testament,

I have no concern; because they affect only such a degree of inspiration as I think it not prudent, and am sure it is not necessary, to assert. I leave them therefore to be answered by those, if any such there be, who imagine that Paul would need an immediate revelation from heaven, and a miraculous dictate of the Holy Ghost, to remind Timothy of the cloak and writings which he left at Troas, or to advise him to mingle a little wine with his water.

Waving therefore the farther discussion of these topics, on which it would be more easy than profitable to enlarge, I shall conclude this dissertation with a reflection or two of a practical nature, into which I earnestly treat the reader to enter with a becoming attention.

Let me engage him seriously to pause and consider, what sort of an impression it ought to make upon us, to think that we have such a book; a book written by a full divine inspiration: That amidst all the uncertain variety of human reasonings and conjectures, we have a celestial guide through the labyrinth: That God hath condescended to take care, that we should have a most authentic and unerring account of certain important, though very distant facts, many of which were wrought with his own hand; and with these facts, should have a system of most weighty and interesting doctrines, to the truth of which he makes himself a witness. Such a book must, to every considerate person, appear an inestimable treasure; and it certainly calls for our most affectionate acknowledgment, that God should confer such a favour on any of his creatures, and much more on those who, by abusing in too many instances their natural light, had made themselves so utterly unworthy of supernatural.

From this view of the inspiration of scripture we may also infer, our obligation to study it with the greatest attention and care; to read it in our closets and our families; and to search in the most diligent and impartial manner into its genuine sense, design, and tendency; which is in the main so evident, that no upright heart can fail of understanding it, and every truly good heart must delight to comply with it. This is indeed a most important inference, and that without which all our convictions of its divine authority will only condemn us before God and our own consciences. Let us therefore always remember, that in consequence of all these important premises we are indispensably obliged to receive, with calm and reverend submission, all the dictates of scripture; to make it our oracle; and, in this respect, to set it at a due distance from all other writings whatsoever: as it is certain there is no other book in the world that can pretend to equal authority, and produce equal or comparable proofs to support such a pretension. Let us measure the truth of our own sentiments, or those of others, in the great things which scripture teaches, by their conformity to it. And O that the powerful charm of this blessed book might prevail to
As proved from the facts recorded in its history

to draw all that do sincerely regard it into this centre of unity! That dropping those unscriptural forms which have so lamentably divided the church, we might more generally content ourselves with the simplicity of divine truths as they are here taught, and agree to put the mildest and kindest interpretation we can, upon the language and sentiments of each other. This is what I cannot forbear inculcating again and again, from a firm persuasion that it is agreeable to the spirit of the gospel, and pleasing to its great Author: And I inculcate it in this place, and at this time, with peculiar affection, as the providence of God around us calls us loudly to do all we can with a safe conscience, to promote a union among the protestants. And I heartily pray, that our mutual jealousies and prejudices, which some are so unseasonably labouring to exasperate, may not provoke God to drive us together by a storm of persecution; if peradventure the band of suffering together may be strong enough to bind those whom the endearments of the same Christian profession, the same rule of faith, of manners, and of hope, have not yet been able to unite.

On the whole, let me most affectionately invite and entreat every reader, whatsoever his rank in life, or his proficiency in learning may be, seriously to consider the practical design of these sacred oracles, the sense and authority of which I have been endeavouring to explain and assert. It is indeed a mystery in divine Providence, that there should still remain so much difficulty in them, as that, in many points of doctrine, thoughtful, serious, and I trust, upright men should form such different opinions concerning the interpretation of so many passages, and the justice of consequences drawn from them on the one side, and on the other. But of this there can be no controversy, "That the great design of the New Testament (in delightful harmony with the Old,) is to call off our minds from the present world, to establish us in a belief of a future state, and to form us to a serious preparation for it by bringing us to a lively faith in Christ, and, as the genuine effect of that, to a filial love to God, and a fraternal affection for each other;" or in one word, (and a weightier and more comprehensive sentence was never written, to teach us, that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, even the glorious appearance of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ. (Tit. ii. 12, 13.) To his almighty hand may our souls be committed by a faith productive of these glorious fruits, and under the sanctifying, quickening, and supporting influences of his Spirit, may we wait for his mercy unto eternal life! Then shall no terror of suffering, no allurement of pleasure, no sophistry of error, be able to seduce us; but, guided by that light and truth which shines forth in the sacred pages, we shall march on to that holy hill, where, having happily escaped the dangers of that dark path which we now tread, we shall greet the dawning of an everlasting day, the arising of a day-star which shall go down no more. Amen!

Y 2
POSTSCRIPT.

A Sketch of the Arguments, by which the Inspiration of the Old Testament may be proved in the easiest method, and by the most solid and convincing evidence.

If the proof of the inspiration of the Old Testament be deduced in its full compass from its first principles, we must have recourse to a method, very nearly resembling that which is taken in the three Sermons referred to above, for proving the authority of the New; we must first prove, That the books are genuine, and then, That the history which they contain is credible; from which premises the inspiration of the Old Testament may easily be inferred by a train of arguments, similar to that which we have pursued in the Dissertation above.

For proving the genuineness of the books, I should think it proper briefly to shew, (what I think hardly any will be so ignorant and confident as to deny,) that the Jewish religion is of considerable antiquity, and was founded by Moses about fifteen hundred years before Christ's time; and farther,—that the Jews, before and at the time of Christ, had books among them bearing the titles of those which make up what we Protestants, call the canonical Books of the Old Testament;—and that these books then received in the Jewish church, were the genuine works of the persons to whom they were respectively ascribed:—From hence it is easy farther to shew, that they have not suffered, and (considering what a guard the Jews and Christians were upon each other,) could not suffer any material alteration since; and consequently, that the Old Testament, as now extant in the Hebrew and Chaldee languages, is genuine, and in the main such as it originally was.

In order to prove its credibility from this established medium, we may prepare the way by shewing, that many material facts, which are there recorded, are also mentioned by very ancient Heathen writers.—And it is yet more important to shew, as we very easily may, that there is room to go over the same leading thoughts, with those insisted upon in the second of the three Sermons mentioned above, and to argue the credibility of the story from the certain opportunities, which the writers had of informing themselves as to the certain truth of the grand facts which they assert, as having themselves been personally concerned in them, and from those many marks of integrity and piety to be found in their writings, which may do as much as any thing of that kind can do, to obviate any suspicion of an intention to deceive.—We may here also advance farther, and demonstrate beyond all contradiction, that the facts asserted were of such a nature, as could not possibly have gained credit, had they been false; yet that they did gain most assured credit, of which the persons receiving these books gave the most substantial evidence that can be imagined, by receiving, on the authority of these facts, a system of laws, which though considered as to be divinely supported, they were admirably wise, yet were of such a nature, that, without such an extraordinary Providence as nothing but an assurance of such
Arguments for the Inspiration of the Old Testament.

an original could have warranted them to expect, they must necessarily have
proved ruinous to the State they were intended to regulate and establish*.

A farther and very noble evidence of the truth of the grand facts at-
tested in the Old Testament, and of the inspiration of a considerable part of it
may be drawn from the consideration of those numerous and various predictions
to be found in it, which refer to a multitude of events, several of them before
utterly unexampled, which no human sagacity could possibly have foreseen,
and which nevertheless happened exactly according to those predictions†.

Having advanced thus far, we may take up a set of arguments correspondent
to those insisted on above, to prove from its genuineness and credibility, now
supposed to be evinced, that the Old Testament was written by a superintendent
inspiration: And this we may argue, not merely or chiefly from the tradition
to this purpose, so generally and so early prevailing in the Jewish church, though
that is considerable, nor even from those very signal and glorious internal
evidences of various kinds, which every competent judge may easily see and
feel, but from surveying the character and circumstances of the persons by whom
the several books were written, in comparison with the genius of that dispensation
under which they lived and wrote. This may, in all the branches of the argu-
ment, be proved in this way, with the greatest ease and strength, concerning
Moses and his writings: And, when the authority of the Pentateuch is estab-
lished, that of the most material succeeding books stand in so easy and natural
a connection with it, that I think few have been found, at least since the con-
troversy between the Jews and the Samaritans, who have in good earnest
allowed Moses to have been a messenger from heaven, and denied the inspiration
of the prophets, and of the books which we receive as written by them.

But it is obvious, that the illustration of all these propositions would be the
work of a large volume, rather than of such a postscript to a dissertation, itself of
so moderate a length. I have discussed them all with the most material objections
which have been advanced against them, in that course of theological lectures,
which I mentioned in the Preface to the first volume, and which it is my continual
care to render worthy the acceptance of the public in due time, by such altera-
tions and additions as frequent reviews, in conjunction with what occurs to me in
reading, conversation, or meditation, may suggest.

I shall conclude these hints with the mention of one argument for the inspiration
of the Old Testament, entirely independent on all the former, which a few
words may set in a convincing light, and which must be satisfactory to all who
see the reasonableness of acquiescing in what I have urged above; I mean,—That
the inspiration, and consequently the genuineness and credibility, of the Old Testa-
ment, may be certainly inferred from that of the New ‡, because our Lord and his
apostles

* The reader will easily imagine, I here refer especially to the laws relating to letting
all the land lie fallow together once in seven years, and two years together at every Jubilee,
the descent of their borders at the three great feasts, when all the males went up to the
tabernacle or temple, and the disguise of cavalry; to omit some others.

† It may be objected to this, that the authority of the New Testament, as stated in the
sermons referred to, and in most other defences of Christianity, is in part proved from
the prophecies of the Old; so that the argument here urged would be circular. To which
I would answer, (1) That, if we were to take this medium alone, we must indeed subtract
from the proof of Christianity all that branch of its evidence which grows from prophecies
in the Old Testament; and then, all that arises from miracles, internal arguments, and the
wonderful events, which have followed its first promulgation, would stand in their full
force, first to demonstrate (I think, to high satisfaction) the divine original of the New
Testament, and then to prove the authority of the Old: (2) That most of the enemies of

‡ See Dr. Sykes's Connection.
Arguments for the Inspiration of the Old Testament.

Apostles were so far from charging the scribes and Pharisees, (who on all proper occasions are censured so freely,) with having introduced into the sacred volume any merely human compositions, that, on the contrary, they not only recommend a diligent and constant perusal of these scriptures, as of the greatest importance to men's eternal happiness, but speak of them as divine oracles and as written by the extraordinary influence of the Holy Spirit upon the minds of the authors.

I desire that the following list of scriptures may be attentively consulted and reflected on in this view. I might have added a great many more, indeed several hundreds, in which the sacred writers of the New Testament argue from those of the Old in such a manner, as nothing could have justified but a firm persuasion that they were divinely inspired. Now as the Jews always allowed, "that the testimony of an approved prophet was sufficient to confirm the mission of one who was supported by it," so I think every reasonable man will readily conclude, that no inspired person can erroneously attest another to be inspired; and indeed the very definition of plenary inspiration, as stated above, absolutely excludes any room for cavilling on so plain a head. I throw the particular passages, which I choose to mention, into the margin below*; and he must be a very indolent inquirer into a question of so much importance, who does not think it worth his while to turn carefully to them, unless he has already such a conviction of the argument, that it should need no farther to be illustrated or confirmed.

The Mosaic and Christian Revelations do nevertheless own those which we call the prophetic books of the Old Testament to be more ancient than the New; and on this foundation alone, without taking for granted, that they are either inspired or genuine, we derive an argument for Christianity from their mere existence, and then may argue backward, that they were divinely inspired and therefore genuine; and so, by a farther consequence, may infer from them the divine authority of the Mosaic religion, which they so evidently attest; which is an argument distinct from the testimony of the authors of the New Testament, but important enough to deserve a mention.

*John v. 39; Mat. iv. 4, 7, 10; Mark xii. 24; Luke x. 26, 27; Mat. v. 17, 18, xvi. 42; xxii. 29, 31, 43; xxiv. 15; xxvi. 54, 56; Luke i. 67, 69, 70; xvi. 31; xxiv. 25, 27; John x. 35; Acts ii. 16, 25; iii. 22, 24; iv. 25; xvii. 11; xviii. 24, 28, xxviii. 25; Rom. iii. 2, 10; ix. 25, 27, 29; x. 5, 11, 16; xv. 4; xvi. 26; 1 Cor. x. 11; 2 Cor. iv. 13; vi. 16, 17; Gal. iii. 8; 1 Tim. v. 18; 2 Tim. iii. 15, 16; Heb. i. 5—15; iii. 7; Jam. ii. 8; iv. 5, 6; 1 Pet. i. 10—12; 2 Pet. i. 19—21.
NUMBER III.

ADVERTISEMENT

RELATING TO THE FOLLOWING TABLE.

As I thought it would be acceptable to my readers, to have the contents of the several sections of this work (which must contain an abridgment of the evangelical history,) exhibited in one connected view as concisely as possible, I chose, for many obvious reasons, to dispose it into a chronological table.

So far as the harmony of the four evangelists, and the order of the facts mentioned in them, is in question, I have given my reason for the present disposition of my notes on the several sections, whose connection is liable to the greatest disputes. But it would be a work of great additional labour, to enter into a discussion of the correspondence between the sacred chronology in this part of it, and the profane. Had I leisure and ability to canvass all that learned men have said in support of the different schemes they have advanced on this head, I should think this Appendix to a Family Expositor a very improper place to attempt it, as such an inquiry must take up a great deal of room, and as it is an affair in which after all, I think, they have very little concern. And indeed, to say the truth, I much question whether on the most accurate inquiry it is possible absolutely to fix it, since if the very day of Herod's death could be determined, (which after all, I think, it cannot be,) there would still be room to debate, how long before that time Jesus was born, as also what distance of time there was between the first appearance of John the Baptist, and Christ's entering on his public ministry. One conjecture may seem more probable than another: but beyond conjecture, I think, none has attained; and the chronology must vary with the diversity of that conjecture of these particulars.

The learned reader will immediately perceive, that amidst the various hypotheses which would offer themselves here, I have taken the middle way, not only as in obscure cases I think that generally the safest, nor merely that this table might in the main agree with those of our illustrious Chronologers, Bp. Pearson and Dr. Prideaux, to whose judgment on such questions I pay a very great deference; but chiefly as on the most exact and impartial examination I could form of the reasons and foundations, on which other critics
critics proceed, in placing the chief events a few years higher or lower, (and it is well known, that but very few years can be in question,) I found them by no means satisfactory, and the former class much less so, than I imagined when I began the first volume of this work, and before I had so carefully searched into some of the authorities.

I once thought of adding a few notes to this Table; but I found, that, if I attempted any thing important, they must be so large as greatly to swell the bulk, and therefore I have waved it, and content myself with saying, That though I am not without my doubts as to several articles, I know not any scheme, which has on the whole stronger supports, and is liable to fewer objections.

There might have been several columns added to the Table, expressing the years of other celebrated æras corresponding with those here mentioned; but any one may easily supply these to himself when he recollects, that the first year of the common æra of Christ's birth, from which we reckon this the 1760th, was (according to the computation here received) the 4004th from the creation of the world, the 753d from the building of Rome, and the 4714th of the Julian period.

It may not be improper to repeat what I have observed elsewhere, that, according to Sir Isaac Newton's computation, the Jewish Passover happened A. D. 30, on Saturday, March 25.—A. D. 31, on Wednesday, March 28.—A. D. 32, on Monday, April 14.—A. D. 33, on Friday, April 3.—and A. D. 34, on Friday, April 23.

To this I shall only add, that Augustus, in whose days Christ was born, reigned after the defeat of Mark Antony at Actium 44 years.—Tiberius, after he had been colleague with Augustus in the empire about three years, became sole emperor on the death of Augustus, August 19, A. D. 14.—Caligula succeeded on the death of Tiberius, March 16, A. D. 37.—Claudius succeeded on the death of Caligula, Jan. 34, A. D. 41.—And Nero on the death of Claudius, October 13, A. D. 54, whose reign continued to June 9, A. D. 68, beyond the limits of this history.
A

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE,

OF THE

Several Events recorded in the History of the Evangelists, and Acts of the Apostles; containing also the Contents of the several Sections of this Work.

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| J. P. | 4739. | After the common Era of Christ's Birth. J. P. 4742. 15 12 Tithes, with dues. 15 | 4743. | 16 30 Makes a short visit to Capernaum, and from thence goes up to Jerusalem to the first Passover, after his entrance on his ministry, and drives the traders there out of the temple, § 24. 8 to the passover at Jerusalem, discourses with the doctors in the temple, and returns to Nazareth, § 14. John the Baptist opens his ministry, and multitudes come to receive his baptism, § 15; to whom he addresses suitable admonitions, proclaims the approach of the Messiah, § 16, and gives a public testimony to the dignity of his person, § 17. Jesus comes from Nazareth, and is baptized by John; the Spirit descends upon him, and a voice from heaven declares him to be the Son of God, § 18. Jesus is led into the wilderness, where he fasts forty days, and is tempted by the devil, § 19. John is examined by the Jews, and declares he is not the Messiah, referring them to one incomparably superior to himself, § 20. Sees Jesus coming towards him, and hears a repeated testimony to him as the Lamb of God; upon which two of his disciples follow Jesus, and Andrew brings Peter to him, § 21. Jesus goes into Galilee, where he calls Philip and Nathaniel, § 22. Attends a marriage there at Cana, where he performs the miracle of turning water into wine, § 23. Makes a short visit to Capernaum, and from thence goes up to Jerusalem to the first Passover, after his entrance on his ministry, and drives the traders there out of the temple, § 24. His conference with Nicodemus, § 25, 26. Goes from Jerusalem into the land of Judea, and there baptizes, by his disciples; John hears of it, and rejoice in it, gives his last public testimony to Jesus, § 27. John is cast into prison for his faithfulness in reproving Herod, § 28. Jesus near the winter solstice, returns into Galilee through Samaria, confers with a woman of Sichar, and spends two days there, § 29, 30. Comes into Galilee, and preaches there; and while at Cana, cures a nobleman's son who was dying at Capernaum, § 31. Preaches at Nazareth; but being rejected there, goes to settle for a while at Capernaum, § 32. Preaches with great acceptance at Capernaum, and calls Peter, Andrew, James, and John, to a more stated attendance upon him, § 33, 34. Casts
Casts out a devil in the synagogue at Capernaum, and cures Peter’s mother-in-law, § 35.

The next morning, after retirement, he sets out on a circuit to the other cities of Galilee, and is followed by multitudes from various parts, § 36.

Preaches his celebrated sermon on the mount, § 37.

Descending from the mount, he cleanses a leper, and then withdraws into the wilderness to pray, § 44.

Returns to Capernaum, where he cures a man disabled by the palsy, and calls Matthew, § 45.

Goes up to his Second Passover at Jerusalem, where he cures the lame man at the pool of Bethesda on the sabbath, and vindicates that action before the Sanhedrim, § 46—48.

Returning into Galilee, he vindicates his disciples for rubbing out the ears of corn on the sabbath-day, § 49, and on another sabbath cures a man with a withered hand, and justifies his healing on that day, § 50.

Multitudes follow him to the shore on his withdrawing to the sea of Galilee, whom he heals of all their diseases, and charges those that were possessed not to discover who he was, § 51.

Having spent the night in prayer on a mountain, he chooses the twelve apostles; and then comes down into the plain, where he works many miracles before the multitude, § 52; and repeats several passages which he had delivered in his sermon on the mount, § 53, 54.

Returns to Capernaum, and cures at a distance the centurion’s servant, who was sick of a palsy, § 55.

Going the next day to Nain, he raises the widow’s son from the dead, § 56.

Answers the disciples of John, who came to ask him whether he was the Messiah, § 57; discourses to the multitude concerning John, § 58; and laments over the impenitent cities of Galilee, § 59.

Dines at a Pharisee’s house, and vindicates the woman who anointed his feet there, § 60.

Makes a progress through every city in those parts, attended by the twelve, and certain pious women; answers the blasphemous Pharisees, who charged his miracles on a compact with Satan; cautions them against the unpardonable sin, and warns them of the danger of their sinful words, § 61, 62.

Upbraids the perverseness of the Pharisees, in demanding
manding a sign from heaven; and declares the parable of the relapsing demoniac, § 63.

Declares his resolution of persisting in his work, and his endeared affection to his obedient disciples, § 64.

Goes to the sea-side, and there delivers to the multitude the parable of the sower, § 65, which he explains to his disciples, § 66; delivers and explains the parable of the tares, § 67; and then adds those of the springing seed, the mustard seed, the leaven, the hid treasure, the pearl, and the net, § 68.

Having answered some that seemed disposed to follow him, he crosses the sea and stills a tempest, § 69.

Arriving at the country of the Gadarenes, he dispossesses two demoniacs; and permitting the demons to enter into a herd of swine, he is desired by the Gadarenes to depart, and crosses over to Capernaum, § 70.

Being entertained at Matthew's house, he justifies his conversing with publicans and sinners, and vindicates his disciples in omitting some austerities that were practised by others, § 71.

Having cured a woman of a flux of blood, he raises from the dead the daughter of Jairus, and performs some other miracles, § 72.

Goes from Capernaum to Nazareth, and being again rejected there, begins another circuit, § 73.

Sends out his twelve apostles with proper instructions to prepare his way; and, after this, they go and preach in different parts, § 74—76.

Herod hears of his fame, and suspects him to be John the Baptist risen from the dead, whom he had lately beheaded in prison, § 77.

The apostles meet him again, a little before another passover, and he retires with them to the Desert of Bethsaida by sea: Multitudes flock to hear him, and he miraculously feeds five thousand: They would have made him king, but he obliges his disciples to take ship, and having dismissed the multitude retires to pray, § 78.

The disciples crossing the sea, are overtaken by a storm: Jesus comes to them walking on the sea, and stills the tempest; and landing near Capernaum, many are brought that were diseased, and he cures all that touch him, § 79.

Being followed by the multitude to Capernaum, he tells them of their worldly views in seeking him, declares himself to be the bread of life, and urges the necessity and benefit of feeding on him, § 80, 81.
The people murmur at his doctrine, and many of his hearers leave him: The apostles assure him of their continued fidelity, but he foretells the treachery of Judas, § 82.

The Pharisees blaming his disciples for eating with unwashed hands, he vindicates their neglect of human traditions, condemns the Pharisees for preferring them to the law of God, and inculcates the necessity of inward purity, § 83, 84.

About the time of this Third Passover, Jesus withdraws to the coasts of Tyre and Sidon, where he casts out a demon from the daughter of a Syrophoenician woman; and returning through the coasts of Decapolis to the sea of Galilee, cures a man deaf and dumb, § 85.

After many other amazing miracles, he feeds four thousand; and then takes ship with his disciples, and goes to Dalmanutha, in the coasts of Magdala, § 86.

Upbraids the Pharisees again for asking a sign from heaven, and cautions his disciples against their leaven and that of the Sadducees, § 87.

Heals a blind man at Bethsaida; and going from thence to Caesarea Philippi, acknowledges to his disciples that he is the Messiah, and commends Peter's confession of him under that character, § 88.

Foretells his approaching sufferings, rebukes Peter for being offended at the mention of them, and exhorts his followers to self-denial and a readiness for martyrdom, § 89.

Christ is transfigured, and discourses with his disciples concerning the expectation the Jews had of Elijah, § 90.

Descending from the mountain where he was transfigured, he casts out an obstinate demon, that had withstood the attempt of his disciples, § 91.

Continuing his progress through Galilee, he again warns his disciples of his approaching sufferings, at which they are offended, § 92—

Comes to Capernaum, and makes provision by a miracle to pay the tribute, §—92.

Perceiving his disciples were contending who should be greatest, he recommends humility and mortification to them, § 93; advises how to deal with an offending brother, § 94; and urges forgiveness by the parable of the unmerciful servant, § 95.

Reproves John for rebuking one who cast out demons in his name, because not of their company, § 96.

Chooses the seventy, and send them out to preach with
Discourses with his brethren about his going up to the feast of tabernacles, and tarries some days after them in Galilee, § 98: Then goes up to Jerusalem about the middle of the feast, (which was in September,) and preaches in the temple, vindicating his own conduct, and asserting his divine mission, § 99.

The Sanhedrim, alarmed at the regard the people shewed him, send officers to seize him; but he declares, they should not execute their purpose as yet, § 100: The officers admire his preaching, and return without him; which occasions a debate in the Sanhedrim between Nicodemus and his brethren, § 101.

Having spent the night in retirement, he returns in the morning to the temple, where he declines giving judgment in the case of the adulteress, § 102: Speaking of himself as the light of the world, he warns his hearers of the danger of infidelity, § 103; shews the vanity of depending on a descent from Abraham, § 104, and declares his own existence to be prior to that of Abraham; at which the Jews are so offended as to go about to stone him, but he miraculously escapes out of their hands, § 105.

Before he sets out on his last circuit through Galilee, the seventy return with joy, and report the success of their embassy, § 106.

Jesus answers the scribes, who inquired the way to life, and delivers the parable of the good Samaritan, § 107.

Leaving Jerusalem he comes to Bethany, where he commends Mary’s attention to his word, as better than Martha’s care to entertain him, § 108.

Being returned to Galilee, he gives his disciples several instructions relating to prayer, § 109.

Dining with a Pharisee, he admonishes him and his brethren of their guilt and danger, § 110; and afterwards cautions his disciples against hypocrisy, and the fear of man, § 111; declines to decide a case of property, and delivers the parable of the rich fool, § 112, repeating his cautions against covetousness which he had formerly given in his sermon on the mount, § 113, and urging them to watchfulness, in expectation of his second coming and of their last account, § 114.

Declares his desire of accomplishing his work, and warns his hearers of the danger of neglecting his message, 115.
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CONTENTS OF THE SECOND VOLUME.

Urges the necessity of *repentance*, and delivers the parable of the *barren fig-tree*, § 116; then cures a *crooked woman* on the sabbath-day, § 117; and continues his journey towards Jerusalem, not intimidated by the fear of Herod from pursuing his plan, § 118.

Being invited to dine with a Pharisee, he cures a man who had a *dropsy*, and vindicates his healing on the sabbath-day, § 119; foretells in the parable of the *great supper* the rejection of the Jews and calling of the Gentiles, § 120; and urges the necessity of deliberate resolution in religion, § 121.

The publicans and *sinners* flocking to hear him, he delivers the parables of the *lost sheep*, and *piece of money* § 122, that of the *prodigal son*, § 123, the *unjust steward*, § 124, the *rich glutton* and Lazarus, § 125; and concludes with exhorting his disciples to simplicity, forgiveness, and humility, § 126.

Passing through Samaria, as he was going up to the *feast of dedication*, he rebukes the intemperate zeal of James and John, and heals *ten lepers*, § 127.

As he was near Jerusalem, he warns the Jews against expecting a pompous appearance of the Messiah's kingdom, and foretells their approaching destruction, § 128; presses his disciples to perseverance in prayer by the parable of the *importunate widow*, and recommends humility by that of the *Pharisee and Publican*, § 129.

Being come to Jerusalem at the *feast of dedication* in December, he opens the eyes of a man *born blind*, § 130; the man is examined by the *Sanhedrin*, and excommunicated; Jesus meets him, and declares himself to be the *Son of God*, § 131.

Having admonished the Pharisees of their danger, he represents himself, first as the *door of the sheepfold*, § 132, then as the *good shepherd* of the flock, § 133; and discourses of his union with the *Father*, upon which the Jews attempt to seize him, and he retires beyond Jordan, § 134.

19 33 Jesus declares against *divorces*, § 135; blesses the *little children*, § 136; answers the *young ruler*, who applied so respectfully to him: discourses of the *danger of riches*, § 137; and warns the Jews not to envy the Gentiles being called to equal privileges with themselves, by the parable of the *labourers in the vineyard*, § 138.

Hearing of the sickness of Lazarus, he determines to
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<td>to return into Judea, § 139, where he raises Lazarus from the dead, § 140.</td>
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<td>The Sanhedrim agreeing Jesus should be put to death, and publishing a proclamation against him, he retires to Ephraim, § 141.</td>
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<td>Setting out on his last journey to Jerusalem, he tells his disciples what he should suffer there, rebukes the ambition of Zebedee's sons, and exhorts to humility, § 142.</td>
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<td>Passing through Jericho, he cures the two blind men, and converts Zaccheus the publican, § 143: After which he delivers the parable of the ten pounds, and represents the vengeance he would take on his enemies, § 144.</td>
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<td>He is entertained at Bethany, and his feet anointed by Mary: Many flock thither to see Lazarus, whom also the chief priests conspire to kill, § 145.</td>
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<td>Christ rides in triumph to Jerusalem on the first day of the week, § 146. When he came near the city, he weeps over it, and at his entrance goes into the temple, which he vindicates a second time from the proph Kanation of the traders, and performs several miracles there, § 147.</td>
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<td>Discourses with some Greeks who came up to the Passover, and retires in the evening to Bethany, § 148.</td>
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<td>Christ returns to Jerusalem the next morning, (that is, on Monday in the Passion week,) and by the way curses the barren fig-tree, § 149; visits the temple, and again reforms the abuses of the traders: the priests are exasperated, and he retires in the evening, § 150.</td>
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<td>Returning to Jerusalem on Tuesday morning, the fig-tree is found withered away: Coming again into the temple, he confounds the members of the Sanhedrin who questioned his authority; utters the parable of the complaisant but disobedient son, § 151, and then that of the vineyard let out to husbandmen, § 152, and of the wedding feast and garment, § 153.</td>
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<td>Confounds the attempt to ensnare him in the question about paying tribute, § 154; proves the resurrection against the Sadducees, § 155; answers the question as to the first commandment of the law, § 156; and repeating his charges and denunciations against the Pharisees, 157, 158.</td>
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<td>Going out of the temple, he applauds the liberality of a poor widow, § 159; foretells the destruction of Jerusalem, § 160.</td>
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Jerusalem, acquainting his disciples with the signs of its approach, and of his second coming, § 160—162; and urges the suddenness of his appearance, as an engagement to watchfulness, § 163, which he enforces by the parable of the ten virgins, § 164, and of the talents, § 165, concluding his discourse with a most affecting description of the last judgment, § 166.

The rulers contrive how they may seize Jesus: Judas makes an infamous contract to betray him: He retires at night to the mount of Olives, § 167.

Christ returns again on Wednesday to teach in the temple as before; but the particulars are not recorded, ibid.

On Thursday morning, he directs two of his disciples to go and prepare the Passover, which was his fourth and last Passover: He comes in the evening, and sits down with his apostles to that feast, § 168.

At the antepast, he rebukes their ambition, and washes their feet, § 169. At supper, he intimates who should betray him, and Judas upon this retires, § 170. He exhorts them to mutual love, foretells Peter's fall, § 171, and then institutes the eucharist, § 172.

After this he addresses his disciples with a large consolatory discourse, § 173—178, which he closes with a solemn prayer, § 179, 180. Then retires from the guest-chamber to the garden of Gethsemane, renewing his caution to Peter and his brethren, § 181.

Christ falls into an agony: His disciples sleep, § 182. Judas betrays him: He yields himself up, and they forsake him, § 183. He is conducted to the palace of Caiaphas, where Peter denies him, § 184.

He is examined and condemned on Friday morning by the Sanhedrim, § 185: Then is brought before Pilate, and examined by him, § 186; is sent to Herod, who returns him to Pilate, § 187, who having in vain attempted his release, declaring to the Jews he found no fault in him, at length yields to their importunity, and gives judgment against him, § 188.

Being delivered up by Pilate, after various abuses, he is led forth to Calvary, and nailed to the cross, § 189. His garments are divided; and while he is himself outrageously insulted, he shews mercy to the penitent robber, § 190; and having commended his mother to the care of John, expires. Amazing prodigies attend his death, and alarm the spectators, § 191.
Christ's body is pierced on the cross; then begged, and buried, by Joseph of Arimathea, § 192.

Judas confesses his guilt on Christ's being condemned, and hangs himself in despair, § 193—

On the morrow after the crucifixion, (which was the Jewish Sabbath, or Saturday,) the Jews desire to have the sepulchre secured, and procure a guard to watch it, §—193.

Christ rises from the dead early on Lord's day morning: Mary Magdalene, finding the sepulchre open, calls Peter and John, who enter into it and return, while Christ makes his first appearance to her, § 194.

The other women, coming to the sepulchre, are informed of his resurrection by angels, who bid them go and tell his disciples: He appears to them as they return, and they report it to his incredulous disciples, § 195.

The guards who had fled away make their report of what had passed to the chief priests, and are hired to disguise the truth. Christ appears to Peter, § 196, and then to the two disciples on their way to Emmaus, § 197, who return and report it; and while they are together, Christ appears to all the company the same evening, § 198.

On that day seven-night he appears again to the eleven, Thomas being with them, and offers to be examined by his touch, § 199.

He discovers himself to Peter and other disciples at the Sea of Tiberias, while they were fishing, § 200; and, after a remarkable discourse with that apostle, foretells his martyrdom, § 201.

Christ appears to the whole body of his disciples in Galilee, and afterwards meets the apostles several times at Jerusalem, discoursing with them of the affairs of his kingdom, § 202.

He leads them out of the city, and, having blessed them, ascends to heaven in their sight: They return joyful to Jerusalem, § 203; with which the history of the evangelists concludes.

Christ (as was said before,) ascends to heaven from the mount of Olives in the view of his apostles forty days after his resurrection, § 1.

The apostles return to Jerusalem, and being assem-
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bled with the rest of the disciples, Matthias is chosen in the room of Judas, § 2.

The Holy Spirit descends upon the apostles on the day of Pentecost, and people of all nations hear them speak in their own language: Peter declares, that this was what the prophet Joel had foretold, § 3, and shews, that Jesus whom they crucified was risen from the dead, and was the true Messiah, § 4. Great numbers are converted, and baptized; and converts are daily added to the church, § 5.

Peter and John cure a man who had been lame from his birth at the gate of the temple, § 6. Peter makes an affectionate discourse to the people assembled on that occasion, § 7.

The two apostles are seized by order of the Sanhedrin, and, being examined by that court, courageously declare their resolution of persisting to preach in the name of Jesus: They are severely threatened, and dismissed, § 8.

Returning to their company, they all unite in an inspired prayer, which is attended with a new effusion of the Spirit. The number and zeal of the converts increase. Many estates are sold, and the price distributed, § 9.

Ananias and Sapphira are struck dead for their fraudulent dealing: The church increases, and extraordinary miracles are wrought, § 10.

The twelve are apprehended and imprisoned, and, after a miraculous deliverance, are brought before the Sanhedrin, and scourged, but, by Gamaliel's prudent advice, are discharged without farther severities, § 11.

26 34

The seven deacons are chosen: The number of disciples multiplies, and many of the priests believe, § 12—

Stephen, disputing strenuously with the Jews, is seized, and brought before the Sanhedrin, § —12. Being accused of blasphemy, he makes a long defence, but is interrupted in it, and tumultuously stoned to death, Saul heartily concurring in the execution, § 13—15.

CONTENTS OF THE THIRD VOLUME, WHICH CONCLUDES THE HISTORY OF THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES.

A great persecution is raised at Jerusalem, where Saul makes havoc of the church, who, being all dispersed
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<td>A.D. 20</td>
<td>Philip the deacon preaches Christ at Samaria, and many believe; which also Simon Magus professes to do, and is baptized. Peter and John, being sent by the apostles, communicate the Spirit by the imposition of their hands: and Simon offering money for the like power, Peter detects and censures his hypocrisy. The two apostles return to Jerusalem, preaching the word in many villages of the Samaritans. Philip is ordered by an angel into the desert in the way to Gaza, where he instructs an Ethiopian eunuch in the faith of Christ; and, having baptized him, the Spirit takes him to Azotus, from whence, when he had preached in all the cities of the neighbouring coast, he comes to Cæsarea.</td>
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<td>A.D. 34</td>
<td>Saul, setting out for Damascus with an intent to persecute the church there, is miraculously converted by Christ’s appearing to him on the way, who bids him go to Damascus, where he should hear what he must do. The light that shone around him strikes him blind, and, being led to Damascus, he continues three days fasting. Ananias, by divine direction, comes and restores his sight, declaring that the Lord had chosen him to be his witness unto all of what he had seen and heard; and, having baptized him, he receives the Holy Spirit. Immediately he preaches Christ at Damascus, and confounds the Jews, proving that Jesus is the true Messiah. Then goes into Arabia, and preaches there: from whence he returns to Damascus, where the Jews seek to kill him, but he makes his escape in the night.</td>
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<td>A.D. 35</td>
<td>Three years after his conversion, Saul returns to Jerusalem, and is introduced by Barnabas to Peter and James; but, preaching boldly there, he is again in danger from the Jews; on which the brethren conduct him to Cæsarea, and send him away to Tarsus. The persecution ceases, and the churches are multiplied. Peter, making a progress through the neighbouring parts</td>
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<td>Cornelius, a devout centurion, is divinely admonished to send to Joppa for Peter, who, in obedience to the divine command, comes with his messengers to Cæsarea, preaches the gospel to him and his friends though Gentiles, and receives them into the church by baptism, §22, 23. Peter, returning to Jerusalem, is questioned by the brethren of the circumcision for his conversing with such as were uncircumcised; but, on his giving an account of the matter, they acquiesce, and bless God for his grace to the Gentiles, §24. The gospel is preached at Antioch, and a great number of the Greeks believe. Barnabas is sent from the church at Jerusalem to confirm the disciples at Antioch, who are first called Christians there, §25. Barnabas goes to Tarsus for Saul, and bringing him to Antioch, they spend a year together there, ibid. Agabus comes thither from Jerusalem, and foretells an approaching famine: A collection is resolved upon for the poor brethren in Judea, which is sent to Jerusalem by the hands of Barnabas and Saul, ibid. Herod Agrippa puts James to death at Jerusalem, and imprisons Peter, who is delivered by an angel, §26. Herod extravagantly applauded at Cæsarea dies miserably by the stroke of an angel, §27. Barnabas and Saul having executed their commission, and carried to Jerusalem what was collected for the poor brethren, return to Antioch, and bring with them John surnamed Mark, §28. The Holy Spirit orders Barnabas and Saul to be set apart to preach to the Gentiles: They go to Seleucia attended by John, and from thence sail to Cyprus: Having preached at Salamis, they go through the island to Paphos, where Elymus opposing them is struck blind by Saul, (hereafter called Paul,) and Sergius Paulus the proconsul is converted, ibid. From hence they sail to Perga in Pamphylia, where John departing from them, returns to Jerusalem, §29. Paul and Barnabas go on to Antioch in Pisidia, where Paul makes a long discourse in the synagogue, and the Gentiles desire to hear him again, ibid. The Jews rejecting the word, they turn to the Gentiles; and</td>
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<td>8</td>
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<td>Paul and Barnabas continue a time long with the disciples at Antioch, § —32.</td>
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<td>9</td>
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<td>The Jewish converts urge the necessity of circumcision: Debates arise at Antioch; and Paul and Barnabas are sent, with some others, to consult the apostles and elders at Jerusalem, § 33—</td>
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<td>10</td>
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<td>Having passed through Phoenicia and Samaria in their way, declaring the conversion of the Gentiles to the great joy of all the brethren, they come to Jerusalem, where the matter is debated in a full assembly: in which, after Peter and James had spoken for their liberty, the celebrated decree is made in favour of the Gentile converts, §—33, 34. They send back messengers with Paul and Barnabas, who arrive at Antioch with the decree; and having made some stay there, Judas returns to the apostles, but Silas chooses to continue longer there, § 35.</td>
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<td>Peter comes down to Antioch, and is publicly reproved by Paul for dissimulation in his conduct, <em>ibid.</em></td>
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<td>Paul with Silas, and Barnabas with John surnamed Mark, set out different ways, to visit the churches they had lately planted, §—35. Paul and Silas travel through Syria and Cilicia, and several provinces of the Lesser Asia, and come to Derbe and Lystra, where having associated Timothy with them, they go on to Phrygia, Galatia, and Mysia.</td>
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<td>Silas and from thence come to Troas, where they are called to Macedonia, § 36—</td>
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<td>Being joined by Luke at Troas, they sail from thence and cross the sea to Europe, passing by Samothracia to Neapolis, where they land, and go to Philippi §—3r.</td>
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<td>Having preached at Philippi, Lydia is converted, and receives them into her house: But a tumult arising on Paul's dispossessing the Pythoness, he and Silas are scourged, and thrown into prison: The jailor is miraculously awakened and converted, § 37. On pleading they were Romans, the magistrates come and dismiss them; and having visited the brethren, they depart from Philippi, § 38.</td>
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<td>Passing through Amphipolis and Appolonia, they come to Thessalonica, where Paul having preached in the synagogue and planted a christian church, the unbelieving Jews stir up the mob against them, and oblige them to depart § 39.</td>
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<td>Being come to Berea, they are received more candidly by the Jews there, many of whom, and of the Greeks believe; but being followed thither by the Jews of Thessalonica, Paul goes away to Athens, appointing Silas and Timothy to follow him, § 39.</td>
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<td>Paul greatly moved at the idolatry which prevailed at Athens, makes an excellent discourse to the philosophers there; who most of them make light of what he says, but some believe § 40.</td>
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<td>Paul's departs from Athens to Corinth, where he finds Aquila, and Priscilla, and lodging at their house, works as a tent-maker, but preaches every sabbath-day to the Jews and Greeks, § 41—</td>
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<td>Silas and Timothy come to him here: and Paul, rejected by the Jews, turns to the Gentiles, many of whom believe and are baptized, <em>ibid.</em></td>
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<td>Being encouraged in his work by a vision of Christ; Paul continues at Corinth a year and six months and is rescued by Gallio from the rage of the Jews, §—41.</td>
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<td>From hence he writes his First and Second Epistles to the Thessalonians, and that to the Galatians, <em>ibid</em> 1.</td>
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<td>Paul departs from Corinth to Cenchrea, where in performance of a vow which he had made, he shaves his head; From thence he sails to Ephesus, where he leaves Aquila and Priscilla, whom he had brought with him from Corinth; and spending but one sabbath there, as he was hastening to the passover, pursues his voyage to Caesarea, where he lands, and goes up to Jerusalem. There he salutes the church, and having kept the feast, returns to Antioch in Syria § 42.</td>
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Having continued there some time, Paul sets out on another progress, (which was the third that began from thence since his conversion;) in which he visits the Asian churches, and particularly those of Galatia and Phrygia, ibid.

Apollos, in the mean time, preaches at Ephesus; and being farther instructed in the Christian doctrine by Aquila and Priscilla, goes over to Achaia, and preaches at Corinth and other places in that province, § 42.

While Apollos was watering what Paul had planted at Corinth, Paul comes to Ephesus, where some of John's disciples, being instructed by him, are baptized, and receive the Spirit, § 43.

Having taught there in the synagogue three months, meeting with opposition from the Jews, he separates the disciples, and discourses daily for two years in the school of Tyrannus; performing extraordinary miracles, while the exorcist Jews are beaten by a demoniac they would have dispossessed; and preaching the word with such success, that many believe and burn their magical books, § 43.

About this time he writes his First Epistle to the Corinthians, § 44.

Paul thinks of setting out for Macedonia and Achaia, from whence he would go to Jerusalem, and afterwards to Rome; but sending Timothy and Erastus into Macedonia, he alters his design, and tarries some time longer in that part of Asia, § 44.

Demetrius the silver-smith raising a tumult against him, the mob is enraged and cries out for Diana: Paul is advised not to venture among them: The chancellor comes and appeases the tumult, § 44.

Paul leaving Timothy, who was now returned to him, at Ephesus, departs from thence; and having passed through Troas in his way, crosses the sea to Macedonia, where he visits the several churches, gathering a contribution as he passed for the poor brethren in Judea, § 45.

In this journey he writes his Second Epistle to the Corinthians; as also, probably, his First to Timothy, ibid. b. c.

From Macedonia, he goes on to Greece, where he visits the churches at Corinth, and in the neighbouring parts of Achaia: and having finished his collection, after three months abode there, being now ready to embark for Syria, to avoid the Jews he chooses to return by Macedonia, § 45—

From
From Corinth in this journey the apostle writes his Epistle to the Romans, ibid. 3.

Timothy being returned from Ephesus, accompanied Paul in his journey, with Luke and several others, who sail from Philippi after the passover-week to Troas; where, on the first day of the week, Paul celebrates the eucharist, and having preached till midnight raises Eutychus to life, who was killed by a fall as he slept, after which he proceeds on his voyage, and comes to Miletus, designing, if possible, to be at Jerusalem by Pentecost, §—45.

At Miletus he sends for the elders of the Ephesian church, and takes his leave of them in an affectionate discourse, § 46.

Paul and his company pursue their voyage, and having sailed by divers places come to Cæsarea where they are entertained at Philip’s house; and notwithstanding the repeated warnings that were given him by inspired persons of what the Jews would do to him, he resolutely goes up to Jerusalem, § 47.

Upon his coming to Jerusalem, after an interview with James and the elders of the church there, Paul being advised to join with some that had a vow, to obviate the prejudices of the Jews, begins his purification; but is assaulted in the temple by some Jews from Asia, who so incense the people that they would have killed him, if Lysias the Roman Tribune had not come and prevented it, who orders his soldiers to bind him and take him into the castle, § 48.

As they were carrying him away, Paul obtains leave to speak to the people, and gives them an account of his conversion, and of the call he had to preach the gospel, § 49: But upon mentioning his being sent unto the Gentiles, the Jews are enraged and will hear him no farther: The Tribune orders that he should be scourged, which Paul escapes by pleading he is a Roman, § 50.

Paul being brought before the Sanhedrin, occasions a division in the council; and a tumult arising, the Tribune takes him away. Christ appears in a vision to Paul, and tells him he should testify concerning him at Rome. The Jews conspire to assassinate him, which being made known to Paul, the Tribune is informed of their design, § 51.

Lysias sends away Paul under a guard, who bring him by night to Antipatris, and conduct him from thence to Felix the Roman governor at Cæsarea, who orders him into custody till his accusers came, § 52—
He is soon followed thither by the high-priest and elders of the Jews; and Tertullus accusing him, the Jews affirm that what he said was true, § 52. But Paul having made his defence, Felix adjourns the cause till Lysias should come down, and only orders him to be kept under a gentle confinement, with liberty for his friends to come to him, § 55.

On hearing Paul discourse before him and his wife Drusilla, Felix trembles, and puts him off to another opportunity; but though he frequently sent for him afterwards, it was only with a view of getting money from him to release him, § 54.

When Paul had been in custody two years, Felix, on quitting his government, to gratify the Jews, leaves Paul a prisoner, ibid.

Festus succeeding Felix is applied to by the Jews, who renew their complaints against Paul. He makes his defence before Festus, and to avoid his sending him to Jerusalem, appeals to Caesar, § 54.

King Agrippa and Bernice coming to visit the new governor, Festus acquaints them with the case of Paul; and, at the King’s request, Paul is produced before him in a large assembly, § 55. Being permitted to speak for himself, Paul makes an excellent defence, and gives such an account of himself and his doctrine, that Agrippa is almost persuaded to be a Christian; and the assembly rising, he declares Paul might be set at liberty; if he had not appealed to Caesar, § 56.

Paul is shipped from Italy with some other prisoners, in custody of a centurion, and is attended in his voyage by Luke and Aristarchus: Having suffered great extremity in a storm, Paul is assured by an angel, that none of them should perish, which he declares for their encouragement to those that sailed with him, § 57. The storm continues many days, and they at length are shipwrecked on the coast of Malta, but all get safe to land, § 58.

The inhabitants of Malta treat them with great kindness. A viper fastens upon Paul, and he receives no harm: Publius’ father and others are miraculously cured; And after three months’ stay there, they depart from Rome, § 59—

Having touched at Syracuse in Sicily, they sail to Rhegium in Italy, and from thence to Puteoli; from whence they go by land to Rome, being met by several Christian brethren on the way, § 59.
When they were come to Rome, Paul is allowed to dwell in his own hired house, while the rest of the prisoners are delivered to the Captain of the Guard, § 59.

Soon after his arrival Paul has an audience of the Jews, and gives them an account of the Christian Faith; but most of them being hardened in their unbelief, he declares, the salvation of God is sent to the Gentiles, § 60.

He spends two years confined to his own hired house there, preaching the things concerning Christ to all that came to him, § 60.

During this time of his abode at Rome he writes several Epistles; particularly, those to the Ephesians, Colossians, and Philippians; as also that to Philemon; and not long after, that to the Hebrews.—His Epistle to Titus, and the Second to Timothy, seem to be of a later date. *ibid.*

CONCLUSION OF THE HISTORY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.
AN ADDITIONAL NOTE.

Relating to the particular Time, in which the several Historical Books of the New Testament were written.

Since the preceding parts of this work were finished, it has been suggested to me by a much esteemed friend, that it might be proper to say something concerning the Time of writing each of these Sacred Books on which I have commented. I confess it might justly be expected I should touch on this article; and I heartily wish I were capable of doing it in a more satisfactory manner.

In general, it must be allowed, their being so universally received, among those who were most capable of judging, and who were certainly obliged by the highest interest to be accurate in their inquiries, as written by Holy Men, who were contemporary with Christ himself, and personally concerned in the grand facts they record, plainly shows they must have been of very early date, and secures the point which is most important to our faith and edification as Christians.

But as to the particular year, in which either of the Four Gospels, or the Acts, were published, I am of opinion, on the most careful inquiry I have had a capacity and opportunity of making, that we have no certain foundation to go upon in determining it.

It is but very little we can learn from the Books themselves, with regard to this circumstance.—Matthew does not continue his history quite so low as the Ascension of Christ.—Mark indeed goes much farther, and speaks of the Apostles going out and preaching everywhere; which implies, that the Gospel had made a considerable progress before his history was concluded.—Luke carries down the Acts, which book was written after his Gospel, to the end of the second year of Paul’s imprisonment; which shows it could not be written till about thirty years after Christ’s Ascension, but does not certainly prove, it was written quite so soon: And as for the argument from 2 Cor. viii. 18. to prove that his Gospel was dispersed throughout all the Churches with applause, before Paul wrote his Second Epistle to the Corinthians, (that is, before the year 57,) I think it very precarious.—John plainly appears to have intended his gospel as a supplement to the other three, and consequently it must have been the last of the four: But as he mentions nothing which happened after the Ascension, though
though he so certainly wrote after Christianity had been widely propagated, (as appears from what has been said of Mark's conclusion,) it will show, that no conjecture can be formed as to the date of one of these Books merely from the last Article recorded in it.

Tradition does indeed say something on this subject, but not in so determinate, or always in so consistent a manner, as we might have been ready to expect. Irenæus, Eusebius, Jerom, and Augustine are mentioned by almost all the critics and commentators that write upon this head. They all agree in telling us, what is extremely probable, that Matthew's gospel was first written: (Compare Iren. adv. Hær. lib. iii. cap. 1. Euseb. Eccl. Hist. Lib. vi. cap. 1.) Hieron. Catal. Script. Eccles. and Aug. de Consen. Evan. lib i. cap. 1. But in the account of the year of publication they differ. Eusebius, (in his Chronicon,) and Theophylact, whom most of the moderns follow, place it but eight or nine years after the ascension; and Calmet tells us, that almost all the old Greek manuscripts have it thus at the end of his gospel. The Alexandrian Chronicle brings it seven years lower: and Irenæus in the fore-cited place, on the authority of a tradition from Papias, (which in itself seems not very probable,) sets it as late as the preaching of Peter and Paul at Rome: which must have been (if they ever preached together there,) more than fifteen years after that. The same authors says, that Mark wrote two years after Matthew: And hardly any other accounts (so far as I can collect,) say anything determinate about it; though several of them speak of Mark's writing his Gospel at the request of St. Peter. (See Clem Alex. apud Euseb. Eccl. Hist. lib. ii. cap. 15, & lib. vi. cap. 14. Hieron. Catal. Vir. illustr. in Marc. and Epiphani. Hær. 51.) I cannot certainly affirm, that Luke had seen both these, though Mr. L'Enfant thinks he strongly intimates it: And I find little in the Fathers about the time of his writing, more than what Irenæus says, that he digested into writing what Paul preached among the Gentiles; whereby seeming to intimate, that it was after that Apostle had dispatched some considerable part of his ministry. (See Iren. lib. iii. cap. 1.) Eusebius, (Eccl. Hist. lib. iii. cap. 24. & lib. vi. cap. 14.) Jerom. (Catal. in Joan.) and Irenæus, (lib. iii. cap. 11.) say, that John wrote his Gospel in an extreme old age, and near the conclusion of the first century. And this is the substance of what I can learn concerning the light that Antiquity throws on this question.

On the whole, it will appear certain concerning two of the Gospels, those of Mark and John, and probably concerning the third, I mean that of Luke, (whatever we may conjecture concerning Matthew's) that they were not written till some considerable time after our Lord's resurrection. Perhaps this may afford a probable argument, that Matthew's was written sooner; since we can hardly suppose, (as Mr. Le Clerc observes, Eccles. Hist. p. 414,) that the Church should be left so long without any authentic account in
in writing of facts so highly important to its edification and its very being.*

As for the later Evangelists it might perhaps be urged, that they, who wrote not altogether from their own knowledge, but from the testimony of others, would have an opportunity of making fuller inquiries from a greater variety of persons, in consequence of the deliberation they used before the publication of their works. Yet on the other hand, it would on the part of the original witnesses so much increase the probability of some slip of memory, that on the whole it might something derogate from the full credibility of what they have written, were it not for what had been proved above of the divine superintendency and inspiration with which they were favoured: But when this is allowed, the objection immediately falls to the ground; for in regard to this, we may as entirely credit Moses, when relating facts which happened two thousand years before he was born, as Luke, when giving an account of the shipwreck he himself suffered at Malta.

I shall close this Note with observing, that the longer Christianity had been settled in the world before these books were written, the stronger is the argument which we may deduce from the universal reception they met with, to prove their credibility: Because it plainly shews they were perfectly agreeable to what the churches in one place and another had been taught by the lips of the Apostles; otherwise their inconsistency with those originally received accounts would, no doubt, have been esteemed an invincible reason for rejecting them. And when a due weight is allowed to this thought, it will perhaps appear, that if we should bring the date of each book as low as any of the Ecclesiastical writers do, (for which I can see no sufficient reason,) yet the cause of Christianity would not, on the whole, lose any thing material by such a concession.

* See Mr. Le Clerc's Dissertation on the Four Evangelists, prefixed to his Harmony; in which he says as good things as have anywhere met with, in favour of the earliest dates which any have assigned to Matthew, Mark, and Luke.
THE

FAMILY EXPOSITOR:

OR, A

PARAPHRASE

ON

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE

to the

ROMANS.

WITH

CRITICAL NOTES, AND A PRACTICAL IMPROVEMENT ON EACH SECTION.


**PREFACE.**

After what I have said concerning this work, in the prefaces to the former volumes, I have little to add, but what relates to the manner in which I have endeavoured to conduct this part upon the Epistles; which I bless God, he has carried me through, and thank the public they have so kindly encouraged.

As far as I know myself, I have no favourite hypothesis to serve, nor a fondness for any unscriptural phrase: in which so many have, on one side, and the other made the very being of orthodoxy to consist. I have been disposed to let scripture carry me along with it; wherever it naturally leads, rather than resolve it should follow me. Instead of labouring to establish any particular human system, which has always, I fear, a leaven of imperfection attending it; I have endeavoured to keep controversy as much out of sight as possible, and to represent what I verily believe to be the scripture-doctrine, in as simple a manner as I could; and divested of those particular expressions, which some who perhaps are not averse to the main doctrine itself, are ready to rise up against.

But I have not the vanity to hope I have escaped all prejudice. Where it has been manifest; may God pardon it, may my brethren excuse it, and may Divine illumination, more plentifully imparted, preserve others from being led into any errors into which I may have fallen!

I hope it will be deemed no matter of just offence, that I have not always critically examined those interpretations, which, as seeming less natural, I have declined. It had been endless, amidst such a variety of sentiments and explications, to have done this. Some commentators have darkened these epistles so much, that I am sensible St. Paul's writings are best explained, by keeping their glosses as much as possible out of sight. I have therefore frequently passed them over, as if I had never heard or seen them. And if any should impute this to ignorance, I wish they had happened to be in the right; as it had been the saving of a great deal of important time, not to have known the manner in which these writings have been tortured, to serve and save a favourite hypothesis.

It has seemed reasonable to me, when the text and context will bear two interpretations, to prefer that which gives the noblest and most extensive sense, and might make the passage in question most universally useful. And I hope this general apology will be sufficient.

If I have been less sanguine than some would choose, let it be forgiven. I wrote with fear and trembling when I considered the favourable reception which the former volumes had met with, and that these which I now publish might probably follow them over a considerable part of the protestant world: a testimony, I hope, that they breathed a spirit of piety, rather than party; and a reason for caution in these than an air of authority might not mislead, or of rashness offend.

I have
I have endeavoured to guard against excessive length in the Paraphrase; and so much the rather, as St. Paul's sentences are often so long, that I feared I should otherwise have obscured the sense, rather than illustrated it; and have rendered one of the liveliest writers in the world, (for such undoubtedly St. Paul is,) tedious to the reader. To avoid this, I have often broke one sentence of the text into two or three in the Paraphrase; and have had a great deal of work in the review, to correct the obscurity, which was the natural consequence of following one leading thought.

I have aimed at making the Improvements naturally arise out of, and follow the scriptures illustrated; and by tracing the temper of the apostles, under the influence of the great truths they are inculcating, to produce correspondent affections in my own heart. I have endeavoured that the mind of the reader more attentive perhaps at first to the critical sense, may be led into the practical use, which, plain as it generally is, is indeed the end of all, and alas! the hardest of all to teach. I have preferred plain and useful reflections to those which might have been curious and surprising; and proposed those lessons which I would be most desirous to impress upon my own heart.

When this work is read in the families, or closets, of any who practice free prayer, I would desire them to observe how naturally the several improvements will furnish them with proper materials for this important and delightful exercise; and by such a use of them, their hearts may be more powerfully impressed with the truths illustrated, and the duties recommended. In this view, I have in some of them suffered my thoughts, while warmed with serious and devout meditation, to breathe forth the language of prayer and praise; which may furnish my fellow-christians with a specimen of the manner in which most of them may be converted into direct addresses to God.

Upon the whole, the design of this work is not to proselyte men to human names nor to reconcile them to this or the other discriminating phrase: which in the mouth of one may be truth and propriety, and in the mouth of another, falsehood and nonsense; according as any idea, or none, a just, or a wrong idea, may be affixed to them.—Nor is my design to influence christians to worship here, or there—my design is to let into the heart the great sentiments of christianity, and to convey them there as warmly and strongly as I could. And I hope God will graciously reward the faithful care, with which I have consulted the honour of my sacred Guide, by making it the means of spreading true religion, and universal goodness. Amen.

PHILIP DODDRIDGE.
A GENERAL INTRODUCTION
TO THE
PARAPHRASE AND NOTES
ON
THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS.

This celebrated epistle was probably written from Corinth, when Paul was travelling through Greece, after finishing his tour in Macedonia, about the year of our Lord 58, which was the fourth of the Emperor Nero. The chief arguments to prove this have been already stated in a few words, p. 201, note c; and they are drawn from comparing Acts xx. 1—4, with Rom. xv. 25—27, xvi. 21. But for the sake of those who may not have the eighth volume before them, I shall exhibit them again in my notes on those texts as they occur in the epistle, and shall observe the same method elsewhere on the like occasions.

The design of the epistle has been much more controverted than its date; and yet it seems so obvious, that hardly any thing has surprised me more than the different and inconsistent plans which ingenious writers have given of it. I should but confound the reader, as well as swell this preface beyond all due bounds, if I should attempt distinctly to propose and examine them here. Instead of this, I shall therefore content myself with exhibiting (not my own hypothesis, for truly it has been my care to have no hypothesis at all,) but, what upon reading the epistle, without any view but that of following the apostle whithersoever he should lead me, I find to be assured fact; and I will state these contents in as few and as plain words as I can, and so every reader will easily see what this great author intended, by seeing what he has done; for no doubt he answered his own design.

Now I think it must be evident to every reader of common discernment and attention, that Paul is labouring through all this epistle, "to fix on the minds of the Christians to whom he addresses himself, a deep sense of the excellency of the gospel, and
to engage them to act in a manner agreeable to their profession of it. For this purpose, after a general salutation, (chap. i. 1—7.) and profession of his ardent affection for them, (ver. 8—15,) he declares, that he shall not be ashamed openly to maintain the gospel at Rome; for this general reason, that it is the great and powerful instrument of salvation, both to Jews and Gentiles, by means of faith. (ver. 16, 17.) And then to demonstrate and vindicate its excellency in this view of it, the apostle shews,

I. That the world greatly needed such a dispensation; the Gentiles being fallen into a most abandoned state, (ver. 18, to the end,) and the Jews, though condemning others, being themselves no better; (chap. ii. throughout;) as notwithstanding some cavils, which he obviates, (chap. iii. 1—8,) their own scriptures testify: (ver. 9,—19.) So that there was an universal necessity of seeking for justification and salvation in this method. (ver. 20, to the end)

II. That Abraham and David themselves sought justification in such a way as the gospel recommends, that is, by faith, (chap. iv. 1—12,) and that a very illustrious act of it entailed everlasting honour on that great patriarch from whom the Jews boasted their descent, (ver. 13, to the end.)

III. That hereby believers are brought into so happy a state, as turns the greatest afflictions of life into an occasion of joy. (chap. v. 1—11.)

IV. That the calamities brought on the seed of the first Adam by his ever-to-be-lamented fall, are with glorious advantage repaired to all who by faith become interested in the second Adam, (ver. 12, to the end).

V. That far from dissolving our obligations to practical holiness, the gospel greatly increases them by a peculiar obligation, (chap. vi. 1—14,) which the apostle strongly urges upon them. ver. 15, to the end.

By these general considerations, St. Paul illustrates the excellency of the gospel in the six first chapters of this epistle, and they must be acknowledged considerations of the highest importance.

There were great numbers of Jews at Rome, many of whom had embraced the gospel; to make them therefore more sensible how glorious a dispensation it was, and to take them off from a fond attachment to the Mosaic law, now they were married to Christ by a solemn profession of his religion, (chap. vii. 1—6,) the apostle largely represents how comparatively ineffectual the motives of the law were to produce those degrees of obedience and holiness, which by a lively faith in the gospel we obtain. (Chap. vii. 7, to the end. Chap. viii. 1, 2.) And here, in all the remainder of this celebrated chapter, the apostle gives a more particular view of those things which rendered the gospel so much more efficacious for this great purpose, viz. that of forming the soul
soul to holiness, than the legal economy had been: (chap. viii. ver. 9.) The discovery it makes of the incarnation and death of Christ, ver. 3, 4; the spirituality of temper to which it calls us, (ver. 4—8; the communication of the sanctifying and comforting influences of the spirit of God, whereby true believers are formed to a filial temper, (ver. 9—17; the views which it exhibits of a state of glory, so great and illustrious, that the whole creation seemed to wait for the manifestation of it, (ver. 18—25); while in the mean time believers are supported under all their trials by the aids of the Spirit, (ver. 26, 27;) and an assurance that all events should co-operate for their advantage, (ver. 28;) since God has in consequence of his eternally glorious plan already done so much for us (ver. 29, 30), which emboldens us to conclude, that no accusation shall prevail against us, and no temptations or extremities separate us from his love. (ver. 31, to the end.)

As the blessings so affectionately displayed above had been spoken of as the peculiar privileges of those who believed in the gospel, this evidently implied, that as all believing Gentiles had a full share in them, so all unbelieving Jews must necessarily be excluded from them. But as the calling of the Gentiles and the rejection of the Jews was a topic of great importance, the apostle employs the ninth, tenth and eleventh chapters in the discussion of it, and so concludes the argumentative part of this epistle.

He introduces what he had to say on this interesting subject, by declaring, that he thought most honourably and affectionately of the Jewish nation, (chap. iv. 1—5;) and then shows,

1st, That the rejection of a considerable part of the seed of Abraham, and even of the posterity of Isaac too, was an incontestable fact, which the Jews themselves could not but grant to have happened, that is, with respect to the descendents of Ishmael and of Esau. (Ver. 6—13.)

2ndly, That the sovereign choice of some individuals to peculiar privileges to which none had any claim; and the sovereign appointment of some, from among many criminals, to peculiar and exemplary punishment; was perfectly consistent both with reason and scripture. (Ver. 14—24.)

3dly, That the taking the Gentiles to be God's peculiar people, when Israel should be rejected, had been actually foretold, both by Hosea and Isaiah. (Ver. 25. to the end.)

4thly, That God hath graciously offered the gospel salvation to Jews and Gentiles, on the same equitable and easy terms; though Israel, by a bigotted attachment to their own law, had rejected it. (Chap. x. throughout.)

5thly, That, nevertheless, the rejection of Israel, though according to their own prophecies it be general, and attended with astonishing blindness and obstinacy, yet is not total, there still being a number of happy believers among them. (Chap. xi. 1—10.)

6thly, That the rejection of the rest is not final, but that the
time shall come when, to the unspeakable joy of the whole Christian world, the Jews shall in a body be brought into the church of Christ. (Ver. 11—31.)

And lastly, That in the mean time their obstinacy and rejection is overruled to such happy purposes, as serve, through the whole various scene, to display in a glorious manner, the unsearchable wisdom of God. (Ver. 32, to the end.)

The remainder of the epistle is taken up in a variety of practical instructions and exhortations, which hardly admit, and indeed do not need so particular an analysis. The grand design of them all is, "to engage Christians to act in a manner worthy of that gospel, the excellency of which he had been illustrating." He more particularly urges,—an entire consecration to God, and a care to glorify him, in their respective stations, by a faithful improvement of their different talents (chap. xii. 1—11);—devotion, patience, hospitality, mutual sympathy, humility, peace, and meekness, (ver. 12, to the end); and in the whole thirteenth chapter,—obedience to magistrates, justice in all its branches, love as the fulfilling of the law, and an universal sanctity of manners, correspondent to the purity of those religious principles which they professed. In the fourteenth, and part of the fifteenth chapter, he dilates more largely on mutual candour, especially between those Christians who did, and those who did not think themselves obliged in conscience to observe the ceremonies enjoined by Moses; and pleads a variety of most pertinent and affecting considerations in this view (chap. xiv. 1, to chap. xv. 17;) in prosecuting some of which, he is led to mention the extent of his own labours, and his purpose of visiting the Romans; in the mean time recommending himself to their prayers. (ver. 18, to the end.) And after many salutations, chap. xvi. 1—16, and a necessary caution against those that would divide the church, he concludes with a benediction and a doxology, suited to the general purport of what he had been writing. (Ver. 17, to the end.)

From the sketch here given, the reader might form some conjecture of the rich entertainment provided for him in this epistle, were he yet a stranger to its more particular contents; but, blessed be God, they are already familiar to almost all who have any regard for the Bible, and take any delight in perusing any part of it. I shall not therefore detain such from Paul's invaluable periods, any longer than whilst I observe, that whereas the interpretation of several phrases which occur here, has very much divided commentators, and laid the foundation for many unhappy contentions, which have been more efficacious to alienate the affections of Christians, than all the apostle's arguments, powerful as they are, have been to unite them; I am very solicitous to handle this epistle in as pacific a manner as possible. I shall therefore, as plainly as I can, give that sense of the disputed phrases which appears to me most
most natural, and briefly suggest in the Notes, the reasons which induce me to understand them in the sense I have preferred. And I hope my readers will be content with this; for were I to produce what interpreters of different opinions have alleged, and canvass the reasons by which they have endeavoured to support their explications and criticisms, I must turn my work into a Treatise of Polemical Divinity; and so quite change that original plan, which I hope will be found much more entertaining and useful, nor should I, if the scheme were thus changed, be able to comprehend, in this whole volume, what I might easily find to offer on this epistle alone.
The Apostle begins his letter with a general salutation to the
Christians at Rome; in which he transiently touches on some
very important doctrines of that gospel, which it was his great
design to illustrate and enforce. Rom. I. 1—7.

Romans I. 1.

MY dear christian brethren, you receive
this epistle from Paul, who, though once
a bitter persecutor, hath now the honour to
style himself a servant of Jesus Christ; whose
property he humbly professes himself to be, and
glories in it, as his highest happiness, to be ab-
solutely at the command and disposal of such a
Master. And he is the more sensible of his great
obligation to this, as he hath been, in so won-
derful a manner, called, not only to the fellow-
ship of that holy faith which we all profess, or
to the common services of the ministerial office,
but even [to be] invested with the distinguished
character of an apostle in the church. He once
indeed

a Called to be an apostle.] As the ju-
daizing teachers disputed Paul's claim to
apostolical office, it is with great pro-
priety that he asserts it in the very en-
trance of an epistle, in which their prin-
ciples were to be entirely overthrown.

And the attentive reader will observe,
with great pleasure, what a variety of
other most proper and important thoughts
are suggested in other clauses of this short
introduction: particularly the views which
the Jewish prophets had given of the
gospel
Indeed boasted that he was of the Pharisaic sect separated from the rest of the Jews by ceremonial observances, in which they place so peculiar a sanctity; but he now rejoiceth much more, that he is, by so special an act of condescending grace, separated to the glorious and saving gospel of the blessed God, destined and devoted to its 2 sacred interests; even to that gospel which before it was thus expressly committed to the Christian apostles, was in a more obscure manner promised, and in some measure declared and exhibited, by his prophets, in the records of the holy scriptures, on which such bright lustre is now thrown by comparing the predictions with the events. I would take every opportunity of promoting in your minds, and my own, the highest regard to this blessed and evangelical dispensation with which God has favoured us; relating chiefly to his only begotten and beloved Son Jesus Christ, our great anointed Saviour, our ever honoured Master and Lord, who was born a few years ago of the seed and family of David, according to the flesh, that is, with respect to his human descent, and so far as flesh was concerned in the constitution of his nature: [But] who is also to be regarded by us in a much higher view, as having been determinately, and in the most convincing manner, marked out as the Son of God, with the most astonishing display of Divine power according to the operation of the Spirit of holiness, which having originally produced that holy thing which was born of the virgin, exerted its energy, upon him on so many occasions, and especially in the triumphant resurrection from the dead, which amply rolled away all the gospel, the descent of Christ from David, the great doctrine of his resurrection, and Deity, and sending the gospel to the Gentiles, the privileges of Christians as the called and beloved of God, and the faith, obedience, and sanctity to which they were obliged in virtue of their profession. Occasion will be given for the like reflections on a thousand other occasions, though the limits of such a work as ours will not allow us particularly to trace them.

2 (Which he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures.)

3 Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David, according to the flesh.

4 And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead;
 Asserts his apostolical mission.

5 By whom we have received grace and apostleship for obedience to the faith among all nations for his name:

6 Among whom are ye also the called of Jesus Christ.

7 To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints: grace to you, and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

of the dead behind; and Mr. Fleming has taken great pains to shew, that wherever the compound word ἔσκοπος (for he considers it as one word) is used, it is always in this sense. See N. of Rom. p. 70.—By this resurrection Christ was declared the Son of God; but to say he was constituted the Son of God by it, seems very unscriptural, since he was proclaimed under that title so long before his resurrection.

* Grace and an apostolical mission.] Many would render it the favour of the apostleship; but that rendering is not the most literal; and it is certain that Paul did receive grace to subdue his heart to the obedience of Christ, and fit him for the ministry of the gospel, before he received his apostolical commission, whenever we suppose that commission to have been dated. I therefore choose to keep the clauses thus distinct.
IMPROVEMENT.

Let us begin the perusal of this excellent, though in many passages obscure, and difficult epistle, with paying our humble acknowledgments to the Divine goodness, that we are favoured with so valuable a part of scripture as that contained in the apostolical epistles. How happy are we, who read from the pen of those holy men the sentiments they entertained of christianity, under the full illumination of the sacred Spirit:—and so learn what were the leading affections which prevailed in their minds. By these letters, they open all their hearts to us, amidst their labours and sufferings, that we also may have fellowship with them, in those important things in which their communion was with the Father and his Son Jesus Christ.

Ver. With particular pleasure let us peruse the writings of Paul, 1 who was, in so peculiar a manner, called to be an apostle, and separated to the gospel of God. He gloried in the name of a servant of Christ, and let us emulate it as the greatest honour. Let us be animated to exert ourselves to the utmost under that character; since God hath been pleased to bring us, though originally sinners of the Gentiles to the obedience of faith, and to reveal unto us the gospel of his Son; that glorious gospel predicted by the prophets, and opened by the apostles, yea, by their Divine Master.

2 May our hearts adore the great Emanuel, who, though he con-
3 descended to be made of the seed of David, according to his flesh, had a Divine nature infinitely superior to it. Let us often reflect on that glorious display of the power of the Holy Ghost, in his resurrection from the dead, by which he was marked out as the Son of God; and yielding to the force of such a demonstration, let us confide in him, as Jesus, our Saviour, and obey him as Christ our Lord.

4 We are called to partake of the privileges of his people; we, 7 belong to the society of those who are eminently beloved of God, and who lie under obligations, as they are called an holy nation, a peculiar people, to be indeed saints, to be holy in all manner of conversation, as being entirely devoted to God and the Redeemer. May such grace be imparted to us from God our Father, and from Jesus Christ our Lord, that we may not dishonour the sacred community to which we belong; that we may not with millions be cast out at last infamous and abhorred, but may enjoy its most important privileges, in that state of final and everlasting glory in which the kingdom of the Son of God shall terminate!
SECT. II.

The Apostle strongly expresses his affection for his Christian friends at Rome: thereby to introduce, with greater advantage, the considerations he had to lay before them in the process of the epistle. Rom. I. 8—15.

9 For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers.

10 Making request (if by any means now at length I might have a prosperous journey by the will of God) to come unto you,

11 For I long to see you, Paul assures the Romans, that he constantly prayed for them;
And that he desired to impart to them some spiritual gift.

most considerable of you, in the greatest distinction of circumstances, but that I may impart to you some spiritual gift, by the laying on of my hands in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ; that by the farther experience which you may then have of the operations of the Holy Spirit, as well as the edification to be received from what discourses may pass between us, you may be established in your Christian faith, and fortified against all temptation, either to renounce or dishonour it: That is, in other words, [I desire] that while I am among you, we may be comforted together; as I have great reason to believe that we shall, by the exercise of the mutual faith, both of you and me; while I am communicating and you receiving these blessings, and those correspondent graces are working on each side, which I doubt not will be for my improvement, as well as for yours b.

And, while I thus express my desire of an interview with you, I would not have you ignorant my dear brethren, that I have often been proposing and contriving to come to you, though I have hitherto, by one means or another, been hindered. I have, I say, long meditated and desired the journey, that I might have some fruit of my ministerial and apostolical labours among you also; even as I have already had from the many churches I have planted and watered among the rest of the Gentiles. Which I mention, not by any means as boasting of what I have done; for I know, that in the circumstances you that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end you may be established:

That is, that I may be comforted together with you, by the mutual faith both of you and me.

Now I would not have you ignorant, brethren, that oftentimes I purposed to come unto you (but was let hitherto) that I might have some fruit among you also, even as among other Gentiles.

I am debtor both to such assistance more desirable, and the apostle more solicitous for such an interview. — As for the words εἰ ἐμοὶ, it makes the construction much plainer to read them before εὐπρεποῦς, as they can by no means, otherwise, have any force at all. They must, therefore, as I. Enfian has well noted, be rendered being among you.

For my improvement, as well as for yours. This thought, so full of respect to his Christian friends at Rome, is suggested with great delicacy and address; and it is very reasonable to suppose that every new instance, in which miraculous gifts were communicated by the laying on of the hands of any of the apostles, would be a source of new edification and establishment to these holy men; as being so evident a token of the Divine presence with them, and a new and solemn seal to the commission they had received.
Reflections on Paul's zeal for the gospel of Christ.

15 So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also.

IMPROVEMENT.

Happy is the church of Christ, when its ministers are thus conscious of the excellency of the gospel, and thus earnestly desirous in the midst of reproach, persecution, and danger, to extend its triumphs; when they can thus appeal to God, that it is with their spirit that they serve him in the gospel of his Son.

This will give them a largeness of heart well becoming their office. Devotion will then flourish in their secret retirements, as well as be maintained by them in public assemblies; and the concerns of the churches, and sometimes of far distant churches, will have a place in their thoughts and prayers at such solemn seasons.

May they ever remember, that as the servants of Christ, they are to be the friends of mankind; and that their Master has laid such obligations upon them, that for his sake they are debtors to the whole world, in every office of Christian friendship, and especially as to any spiritual gift which by their ministration they may be

See ver. 22. 1 Cor. ii. 4. iii. 20, and επιλογισμος plainly signifies learning; Mat. xiii. 54. Mark vi. 2. Acts vi. 22.

\[\text{c} \text{Ready and desirous ] Raphelius shows that προσβούλευσις expresses not only a readiness, but, in some cases, an eagerness of desire. No. cx Herod.}\]
be instrumental in imparting. The more they exert themselves in such services, the more will their own faith and comfort, as well as that of their people, be confirmed.

But in whatever station we are, let us be forming schemes for the service of God, and good of men; projecting our journeys and visits on that plan, yet always with a becoming sense of our dependence on the smiles of heaven, for prosperity and success; and as dutiful children, referring it to the infinitely superior wisdom of our heavenly Father, to put a negative, at his sacred pleasure, upon those purposes which lay nearest to our hearts, and in which we most sincerely intend his glory.

SECT. III.

The Apostle declares his readiness boldly to preach the gospel at Rome, supported by a sense of its excellency; to illustrate which, he shows that the world greatly needed such a dispensation. And first he introduces a discourse of the abandoned state into which the Gentiles were fallen. Rom. I. 16—32.

Romans I. 16.

I HAVE told you (ver. 15,) that I am ready and desirous to preach the gospel at Rome, though the capital city of the world; and indeed there is nothing that I more earnestly wish than opportunities of bearing the most public testimony to it: for, with whatever contempt that sacred dispensation, and they who publish it, may be treated on account of the circumstances and death of its founder, the character of its ministers, and the nature and tendency of its doctrines; I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, but rather glory in it. And I have great reason to do it: for, while other methods, intended to promote the reformation and happiness of mankind, have been all ineffectual; it has clearly appeared that this is the power of God for complete and eternal salvation, to every one that believeth. It contains the most glorious display of the Divine power, efficaciously exerted for this important purpose, and operating in favour of every one who cordially embraces it. Thus salutary is it to the Jew, who is far from being above the need of it, and to whom, by the especial command of our Lord, it is to be first preached and proposed, wherever its ambassadors

* To the Jew first, &c.] There is a noble frankness, as well as very comprehensive sense, in these few words of the Apostle: by which, on the one hand, he strongly
sadors come; yet not to be limited to him, but
proclaimed also to the Greek, and the Roman,
and Gentiles of every nation under heaven;
who are all, with equal freedom, invited to
partake its important benefits. And it is ad-
mirably adapted to secure this great and blessed
end; for in it the righteousness of God b by faith,
that is, the method which God hath contrived
and proposed for our becoming righteous, (Isa.
lvi. 1.) by believing his testimony, and casting
ourselves on his mercy, is revealed to our faith,
and most clearly exhibited, as the great object
of it. As it is written in the prophet Habakkuk,
chap ii. 4. "The just shall live by faith d;" and
as good men were then delivered from the ruin
which involved others, by trusting to and acting
upon the Divine declaration; so now the like
principle of faith, receiving and embracing this
great discovery which God hath made of his
mercy in Christ, secures our life and salvation.
And as in this view it is well worthy of our re-
gard, so there is an absolute necessity of its be-
ing attended to; for the wrath of God is revealed
from heaven e: by many singular interpositions

strongly insinuates to the Jews, their abso-
lute need of the gospel, in order to salva-
tion; and on the other, while he declares
to them, that it was also to be preached to the
Gentiles, he tells the politest and greatest of these nations, to whom he
might come as an ambassador of Christ,
both that their salvation also depended upon
receiving it, and that the first offers of it
were everywhere to be made to the de-
spised Jews.

b The righteousness of God.] \(\text{δικαιοσύνη}
\) as plainly signifies, in several passages
of this epistle, not the essential righteousness
of God's nature, but the manner of becom-
ing righteous, which God hath appointed
and exhibited in the gospel. Compare
chap. iii. 21, 22; x. 3. Compare Phil. iii.
9; Mat. vi. 33. And the phrase may
perhaps have the same sense in several
lvi. 13; li. 5, 6, 8; lvi. 1. Mr. Mace
generally renders it \(\text{the divine justification;}\)
yet cannot always render \(\text{δικαιοσύνη} \) so.

c By faith, is revealed to faith.] I would
connect \(\varepsilon\iota\varphi\iota\varepsilon\varphi\iota\varepsilon\varepsilon\varepsilon\upsilon\nu\sigma\tau\iota\) with \(\text{δικαιοσύνη},\) and
suppose \(\mu\zeta\pi\varepsilon\tau\iota\) to be governed of \(\text{δικαιο-
σύνη},\) thinking the transposition easier
than the interpretation given by many
others, as if it implied its being wholly by
faith, as Mr. Mace renders it; or going on
from one degree of faith to another: for

though it is true that this is the case, I
find no example in which the phrase is
used in either of these senses. Those
which Mr. Locke produces to justify the
former of these interpretations, (viz.
chap. vi. 19; and 2 Cor. iii. 18,) being by
no means exactly parallel. And it is so
plain, that in \(\varepsilon\iota\varphi\iota\varepsilon\varphi\iota\varepsilon\varepsilon\varepsilon\upsilon\nu\sigma\tau\iota\)
the close of this verse signifies by faith, that I wonder
it should have been rendered so differently
in the former clause.

d As it is written, The just shall live by
faith.] The prophet Habakkuk, speaking of
the destruction to come upon Jerusalem
by the Chaldeans, observes how dif-
ferent tho' behaviour and states of good
and bad men would be. The sinner's heart
would be vainly lifted up to his destruction,
while trusting to his own wisdom and
power, (and accordingly prince and peo-
dle became the sacrifices of this foolish
self-confidence;) whereas the righteous,
the truly good man, would preserve his
life by believing the Divine declarations,
and acting according to them; and thus
under the gospel, he that believes shall
live. Some would render it, The just by
faith shall live, or he shall live who is
justified by faith: but however this might
suit the Greek phrase, it seems less agreeable
to the Hebrew, from whence it is taken.

Ewm
of Divine providence, and especially by the
most express declaration of the sacred oracles,
which teach us to look on the grand and final
revelation of it as nearly approaching. And the
terrors of this wrath are apparently levelled
against all impiety and unrighteousness of men
who wickedly restrain the truth in unrighteous-
ness; when what heaven-born Captive would
exert its energy upon their minds, and urge
them to obey its dictate. This is, more or
less, the generally prevailing character; and it
exposes men to a sentence, the terrors of which,
if they were well understood, would soon drive
them, with the greatest solicitude, to seek their
refuge in that gospel, the tidings of which they
now so arrogantly despise.

19 The sad character I hinted at above, of re-
straining and imprisoning the truth in unright-
eousness, is more general than mankind are
aware. We find it not only among those who
have enjoyed the benefit of a revelation from
God, but in all the Gentile nations. For the
main fundamental principles of what is, by any
means to be known of God, that is, that he is the
great Original of all, is manifest among them, for
God hath shewed it to them, by a light universal
as the sun. For those things of him which are
invisible, are, and have been from the very crea-
tion of the world, not only intimated, but being
duly attended to clearly seen by the things
which are made; the whole system of which
bears such eminent signatures of the great Arti-
ficer, as loudly to proclaim his name and attri-
butes, even his eternal power and divinity; so
that if any of the Gentile nations neglect to
trace
godliness, and unrighteousness of men, who
hold the truth in unrighteousness.

Commentators differ much in fixing the
connection of these words.—Some have
considered this verse as another reason
why he was not ashamed of the gospel;
because it contained so awakening a de-
claration of the wrath of God against sin,
and by that means had a most powerful
tendency to awaken men's consciences,
and save their souls; in which view,
some treating the particle γας as an ex-
pletive, have rendered it, there the wrath
of God is revealed. And Mr. Locke brings
it nearly to the same, where he explains it
as a reason why Paul was so ready to
preach the gospel at Rome.—But the
connection hinted in the paraphrase, seems most natural and natural. The sentences
in Paul's writings often run into each
other.
19 Being duly attended to.] Νοέμματος seems
to have this signification, and to be, as it were, included in a parenthesis; so that τον παραγγελιαν is governed of σοφιάς.
20 For the invisible things of him from the
creation of the world are clearly seen, be-
ing understood by the things that are made,
even his eternal power and Godhead; so that
they are without ex-
cuse:
Because that when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful, but became vain in their imaginings, and their foolish heart was darkened.

Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools.

Knowing God: Some understand it as if he had said, Whereas they might have known God; but I think what Paul charges upon the philosophers is, that though they actually knew there was one supreme God, they neglected him, to conform (for low and base considerations) to the established idolatry; which was really the case, to their aggravated guilt and condemnation; as appears from most of the passages in which the Pagan writers bear a testimony to the doctrine of the Unity; a specimen of which may be seen in Dr. Sykes's Connect. chap. xiv. p. 364—363; Dr. Ab. Taylor of Faith, p. 12—17, not; and Cadworth's Intellect. System, chap. Ir. § 10—31, especially § 19—29.

Neither were thankful: It is worthy our observation, that gratitude to God is here put for the whole of religion; and no principle can be nobler, and none can be stronger or more extensive.

Vain in their reasons, ἡμιλαπλιστικας καὶ τοις διαλογισμοις αδοτας] Mr. Locke illustrates this by the stupid folly of their idolatry, 2 Kings xvii. 15, 16; Acts xiv. 15. But I rather think the word διαλογισμοι refers to the perplexing sophistry of the philosophers. I have often thought Lucretius one of the most remarkable illustrations of the character here drawn — What vain reasons, and how dark a heart, in the midst of the most pompous profession of oracular wisdom.

Professing themselves: Φασκονις ἦσαν σοφις, seems just equivalent to Xenophon's ἀνακολοθήσαν προφητικα; which so evidently refers to the pride they took in the title of lovers of wisdom. See Rophel, in loc.
tended to improve, and almost to engross. And as this was evident in a variety of other vices, in which the philosophers of heathen nations joined with the vulgar, so particularly in the early, and almost universal prevalence of idolatry amongst them, by which they changed the glory of the immortal, incorruptible and eternal God, even all the majestic splendors in which he shines forth through earth and heaven, into the representing image of mortal and corruptible man; which, how elegantly soever it might be traced, was a great and insufferable degradation, had their folly proceeded no farther. But not content with this, they set up, as emblems of deity, and objects of worship, brutes and their images, birds and four-footed animals, and even such vile reptiles as beetles, and various kinds of reptiles which creep on the dust.

24 This was such scandalous and pernicious superstition, that it is no wonder that God should in righteous judgment withdraw from those who introduced and encouraged it. He therefore not only left them to sink lower and lower in these absurd methods of worship, but also delivered them up to the vilest uncleanness, in which he changed the detestable lusts of their own heart; which grew more and more outrageous and enormous when the restraint of his common influences was thus withdrawn from their minds.

25 Thus he left them to dishonour their bodies among themselves, as much as they had before dishonoured their rational faculties by such senseless idolatries. This was so prevalent an evil, that even many of them who knew much better, and had in their own minds sounder apprehensions of things, yet from mere secular motives, suppressed that better knowledge, and conformed to popular superstitions and follies, and thereby changed the truth of God, the true doctrines of his nature, and genuine institutions of his worship, into a lie, into abominable idolatries, founded on the falsest representations of God, and often supported

[m Beetles and serpents.] Of this amazingly stupid, yet prevalent idolatry, the worship of serpents, see Jenk. Res. of Christianity, Vol. II. p. 246—248; Ten- nuum of Idol. chap. xiv. p. 532—554; Owen on Serp. chap. iv. and V. Stillingf. Orig. Sac. p. 516, &c.

21 And changed the glory of the incorruptible God, into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds and four-footed beasts, and creeping things.

24 Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves:

25 Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who

* Changed the truth of God into a lie.] Elsner takes great pains to shew that the truth of God here signifies what he really was; and a lie, a false representation. See Elsner's Observ. Vol. II. p. 11. It is well known that idols are often called lies. Isa. xliv. 30. Jerem. iii. 23, xiii. 25. xvi. 19.
They were given up to an undiscerning mind, who is blessed for ever. Amen.

26 For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections. For even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature:

27 And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet.

28 And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient:

29 Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness, full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity, whistlers,

ported by a train of artful forgeries; and, upon the whole, they worshipped and served, with religious homage and solemn devotion, the creature, to the neglect of the great Creator; who, however basely and ungratefully neglected by men, is surrounded with the perpetual homage of the heavenly world, and blessed for ever. Amen. May he ever be held in the highest veneration, by all his creatures in heaven and earth, throughout all succeeding ages.

Therefore, I say, because of this inexcusable neglect of the ever-blessed God he abandoned them to the most infamous passions; for even their women, from whom the strictest modesty might reasonably have been expected, changed the natural use of the other sex to that which is against nature; And likewise their males left ing the natural use of the female, have been inflamed with the most scandalous and abominable desires towards each other, male with males perpetrating that which is most shameful to mention, and detestable to think of, and receiving in themselves the just recompense of their error, in that stupidity and degeneracy of mind to which they were evidently left. And thus upon the whole, as they were not solicitous to retain God in their knowledge, nor to propagate suitable conceptions of him, or address him by proper acts of rational and pure devotion, God delivered them over to an undiscerning mind, to do things most inexpedient and enormous; as he cannot more dreadfully punish one sin than by giving up the offender to more. And accordingly, universal depravation and corruption seized and possessed them; and the whole series of their discourses and actions shew'd that they were full of all manner of injustice, lewdness, mischief, covetousness, and malignity; perpetually injuring each other, and drawing damage and misery on themselves; while they were filled and intoxicated with every imaginable vice, envy, murder, contention, fraud, the invertecy of all evil and pernicious

9 Things most inexpedient. The original expression, is a meiosis, to express things most detestable; as ἀναμνήσθη ὦ γαμη signifies all the inhumanities which Achilles most ungenerously practised on the corpse of Hector. Compare Wids. iv. 23—27. See lib. iii. for. 22

B 2

1 Mischief
And to destructive vices.

sect. iii.

Rom. 1.30.

pernicious habits, which no sense of decency or regard to reputation or interest could reform. Instead of entertaining those friendly regards to each other which common humanity might have taught them, they were whispering something against those that were present, as well as backbiting such as were absent; and being haters of God, discontented with his government and disaffected to his rule as a righteous and holy Being, who could not but be highly displeased with their abominations, they were violent and overbearing in their behaviour to each other, proud of what they had, and arrogant boasters of what they had not; ingenious inventors of evil and vicious things, who piqued themselves on making some new discoveries in the arts of sensuality or mischief. And it is no wonder that when there were such an impious disposition to rebel against God, they should also be disobedient to earthly parents: And that they should act in so wild and unaccountable a manner, as to seem to be without the natural understanding of men; implacable in their resentments, without natural affection, even to their own children in some instances, and to their parents in others. And when a reconciliation was attempted, and mutual engagements entered into with the highest solemnity, they were, on any present appearance of advantage, presently for breaking those pacific treaties, and unmerciful in pursuing their schemes of cruelty and revenge, whenever they got any new opportunity of doing it. This was the character which generally prevailed in the heathen world, who though they knew the righteous judgment of God, and though their consciences, as well as the

30 Backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents.

31 Without understanding, covenant-breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful:

32 Who knowing the judgment of God, that which they commit such things are worthy

include the absence of both parental and filial affection. The custom of exposing new-born infants, which prevailed so generally in the heathen world, and that among polite nations, and persons, in other respects not destitute of humanity, is a most striking instance of the truth of this assertion: as that of killing their aged parents also was of the counterpart.

Who, though they knew the righteous judgment of God, &c.]. The Clermont copy inserts the words you never after every which agreeable to which reading, Mr. Locke renders it, who, though they acknowledge the rule of right [εξαιρέσει], prescribed them
the lessons of their wisest teachers, told them, that they who do such things as these are worthy of death; yet not only do these things themselves, but also look with complacency upon, and agree together with those that do them; forming confederacies to countenance and support each other, and impudently out-braving those who should presume to bear testimony against them.

IMPROVEMENT.

When we dwell on the representation of that character which Ver. 21 this humane and candid apostle gives us of the heathen world, with regard to their idolatries, impieties, and other immoralities, what reason have we to bless God for the dispensation of the gospel; which hath wrought so effectually for the reformation of thousands, who might otherwise have been as deeply drenched in all these enormities as the vilest of them! For we know, that it was not the barbarous nations alone, but some of the politest, who in neglect of all the opportunities they had of knowing better, and in opposition to that better knowledge which some of them actually obtained, were often distinguished for the superstitution of their worship, and the scandal of their lives; so that the chief illustrations of this sad subject are to be borrowed from Egypt, Greece, and Rome.

Let us learn, not only to guard against the vices for which the heathens are here branded, (knowing that the practice in us will be yet more criminal,) let us cultivate the opposite virtues of justice and temperance, benevolence and contentment, peace and charity, sincerity and humility; and let us cherish the natural tender affections. If offences arise, let us always be ready to hearken to terms of reconciliation, and faithfully observe our engagements; taking the greatest heed, that knowing so clearly as we do the judgment by God, and discovered by the light of nature, yet did not understand that they who do these things are worthy of death, and therefore conversed well with those who did them, that is, "convince me, without any marks of disesteem and censure; whereas the Jew, who condemns the evils which he practices, is much more inexusable," so connecting this verse with the second chapter. But I neither think the authority of the Clermont copy, by any means sufficient to justify our admitting this reading, nor can imagine it would make a good sense: for surely if they knew a rule of right prescribed by God, they could not be ignorant that the violation of it would expose them to punishment; and it is evident in fact, from numberless passages in heathen moralists, that they were not ignorant of it. The vulgar Latin does indeed partly follow this peculiar reading; but they add, "non solus qui facit, sed qui consentiunt facientibus, "not only they who commit these crimes, but they who agree with others that commit them," which I think makes a sense much preferable to Mr. Locke's, though by no means agreeable to the original.—It seems here to be implied, that to look with complacency on the vices of others, is one of the last degrees of degeneracy.
These who knew their duty, and condemned the crimes of others,

Sect. iii. *judgment of God, we do not, by any means, give countenance to,* and seem to join in a confederacy with sinners.

Ver. Let us bless God for all the capacities and opportunities he hath given to the heathen nations of coming to the knowledge of himself by the things that are made, which declare his eternal power and Godhead, and render inexcusable both atheists and idolaters among them. But when we recollect how many either entirely lost the truth, or imprisoned it in unrighteousness, let us be most affectionately thankful for so superior a light; for that gospel which is to every believer, without exception the power of God for salvation, and which declareth the righteousness of God, as the object of our faith. May we properly receive it, and so escape the terrors of that Divine wrath which is revealed from heaven against all impiety and unrighteousness of men.

To this revelation let us give the most attentive heed, and be much upon our guard against those vain and sophistical reasonings, to which they, who knowing God, neglect to glorify him as God, are so ready to fly; lest we approve ourselves fools in proportion to the degree in which we profess to be wise, and provoke God to give us up to an injudicious mind, and to leave us to that reciprocal influence which evil principles and evil actions have to render each other more invertebrate and incurable.

Sect. IV.

The Apostle discourses more particularly of those who knew their duty, and yet acted contrary to it; and of the condemnation they must expect from God; that so he might properly introduce the particular charge he had to advance against the Jews, as above all others, answering that character. Rom. II. 1—16.

Romans II. 1.

I HAVE just been speaking of the great and aggravated guilt of those, who not only do things which they know to be displeasing to God, and evil in themselves, but also agree together to countenance those that do them. And it may be, some who know they are not of that number, but, on one principle or another, bear their

Romans II. 1.

Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whatsoever thou art that judgest: for who in whom judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou

Some who know that they are not of that number,] There is a greater delicacy in the apostle’s transition here, than most commentators have imagined. From what he had before said, to prove the most abandoned and ignorant of the heathens inexcusable in their wickedness, he justly infers, that the crimes of those who had such knowledge of the truth as to condemn the vices of others, were proportionably yet more inexcusable. This was evidently the case with the Jews; but he does not directly speak of them till the 9th verse; but draws the inference at first in such general terms as might also comprehend Gentile philosophers, and all others.
Are still more inexcusable in their disobedience to God.

2 But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth against them which commit such things.

3 And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and dost the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God?

4 Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness, and forbearance, and long-suffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?

5 But after thy hardness and unbelief, when thou shouldst have received the knowledge of the truth, it is unrighteous to condemn him whom thou deservest to judge; and art inexcusable; O man, whatsoever thou art that judgest, and pretendest to pass sentence upon others: for I know what the character of such generally is, and I know that the very best of them all have their blemishes and faults; and therefore I may say, that wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself: for thou who judgest, doest the same things in many instances, and consequently art convicted out of thine own mouth. For we know in general, that the judgment of God is according to truth and justice, against all those who do such things, however they may behave towards their fellow-sinners. And canst thou then, by the sentence which thou passest upon others, think to evade that which goeth forth against thyself? Or reasonest thou thus, O man, whosoever thou art, whether Pagan philosopher or Jewish teacher, who judgest those that do such things, while thou dost them thyself, that thou shouldest escape the judgment of God? Or is thy heart so obdurate, as to make a light of those judgments which thou must certainly meet, because they are not immediately executed: and doest thou indeed despise the riches of his gentleness and forbearance and long-suffering, exercised towards thee for such a length of time, so as to think it may be safely trifled with? Surely if thou dost, thou art shamefully ignorant indeed, as not knowing, that the goodness and gentleness of God leadeth thee to repentance.

He bears with thee, that thou mayest prevent the threatened blow, by humbling thyself before him, and forsaking thy sins. But this day of mercy and grace has its limits; and however others who contradicted the moral instructions which they themselves gave.

b *Doest the same things.* Dr. Whitby shews, by many very proper quotations, chiefly from Josephus, that the Jews of that age were guilty of many of those crimes which had been enumerated above. See Joseph. de Bello Judeo, lib. v. cap. 15, [al. 16.] § 6, and lib. vii. cap. 8, [al. 16.] § 1. Edit. Havercamp.

c Gentleness, forbearance, and long-suffering.] Mr. Blackwall (Sect. Class. Vol. I. p. 306.) enlarges on the great emphasis of these words in the original. He thinks *μητρόπιον* signifies benevolence and generosity in the general, *μητρόπιον* mercy in the proposals of pardon and happiness to fallen creatures, and *μητρόπιον* patience in attending so long on such obstinate writhes: I have given what I take to be the exactest rendering of each; but did not judge it convenient to protract the paraphrase of so lively a passage, by attempting in many words to illustrate it.

d Children
6 Who will render to every man according to his deeds:

7 To them who by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory, and honour, and immortality, eternal life:

8 But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness; indignation, and wrath;

9 Tribulation and anguish upon every soul.
There is no acceptance of persons with God.

rent of unmingled misery, even upon every soul of man who worketh that which is evil. This shall be rendered to the Jew in the first place, who far from escaping by his superior advantages and privileges, will, by the abuse of them, be obnoxious to distinguished wrath. Nor shall the Greek escape, who shall be judged according to the light he hath enjoyed, or the opportunity he had of enjoying more. But, as I said before, and repeat it with pleasure, as the more delightful part of the subject, which I love to dwell upon; glory, honour, and peace [shall be] recompensed to every one who worketh good; first to the Jew, who stands fairer (in virtue of the Divine revelation he enjoys,) for distinguished degrees of it, as well as receives the first messages of this salvation; and then to the Greek, who, if he exclude not himself, shall not be exempted from his proper share. For there is no partial acceptance of persons with God, which should engage him on account of outward condition, or lineal descent, to spare obstinacy and wickedness in a Jew, or to reject the humble faith and obedience of a Gentile. And he will fully display this impartiality of administration in the great day of universal judgment; for as many as have sinned without the Mosaic law, and have continued impenitent in their crimes, shall without the law perish; the light of nature, without the knowledge of revelation, being sufficient to condemn them. And as many as have sinned under the instruction and obligation of the law, shall with proportionable severity be judged by

Raphael. Not. ex Xen. in loc. As for the difference between ὅμοιος and ὅπως Elmen (Observ. Vol. II. p. 14) takes some pains to shew, that the former signifies the first conception of anger, the latter a desire and purpose of punishing. Some reference to this interpretation will be found in the paraphrase, though expressed as briefly as possible.

[To the Jews first.] Here we have the first express mention of Jews in this section; and it is introduced with great energy and weight. Their being trained up in the knowledge of the true religion, and having Christ and his apostles first sent to them, will place them in the foremost rank of the criminals who obey not the truth.

Acceptance of persons.] That is, in passing the final sentence, he is determined by their real characters.—This is very consistent with an equality in distributing advantages and opportunities of improvement, according to the sovereign pleasure of the great Lord of all. This assertion of the apostle's, so often repeated, will appear the more important and seasonable, as the Jews thought that no Israelite should be deprived of future happiness, whatever his faults had been; unless he were guilty of apostacy, idolatry, and a few other very enormous crimes. See Mr. Jortin's Discourses concerning the Truth of the Christian Religion, p. 26, 27, and the notes there.

Sinned without the Mosaic law, &c.] It is evident that must here be intended; for none can sin without the natural law, under which all are born.

Perish
the law, and meet with a more awful sentence, as their offences have been aggravated by such express discoveries of the Divine will: For not the men who are merely respectful hearers of the law of God in the synagogues, or loud and vehement applauders and defenders of it elsewhere, [are] just before God, nor will he ever accept any encomiums upon it, instead of the obedience it demands; but the doors of the law, who steadily and universally, in the tenor of their lives, act agreeably to its precepts; they, and they only, shall be justified, in the day of final audit and account; whether their knowledge of it were more or less express. For when the Gentiles, who have not the written revelation of the Divine law, do, by an instinct of nature, and in consequence of the untaught dictates of their own mind, the moral duties required by the precepts of the law, these having not the benefit of an express and revealed law, are nevertheless a law unto themselves: the voice of nature is their rule, and they are inwardly taught, by the constitution of their own minds, to reverence it as the law of that God by whom it was formed.

And they who are in this state, do evidently shew the work of the law, in its most important moral precepts, written upon their hearts, by the same Divine hand that engraved the decalogue upon the tables given to Moses; their consciences joining to bear witness to it, and, [their] mutual reasoning among themselves, accusing those that break such precepts, or defending those who ob-serve them, attest the same thing. As therefore there are sure traces of some natural knowledge of the law, a due regard will be maintained towards them, and on this most equitable principle will the grand process be conducted, in that awful day when God shall judge the secrets of the hearts of men by Jesus Christ, according to the tenor of that glorious dispensation which I may call my gospel, as it is committed to my care;

13 (For not the bearers of the law are just before God, but the doors of the law shall be justified.)

14 For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these having not the law, are a law unto themselves:

15 Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing, or else excusing one another;)

16 In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my gospel.
Reflections on the righteous judgment of God.

Let us revere the righteous judgment of God, which is here laid before us in so particular and affecting a manner; remembering we are each of us to have our part in that day of final retribution, and that the secrets of our hearts will then be made manifest. Let us often reflect upon the awful result; and consider, that indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish will be our portion, if we are contentious and disobedient to the truth, yea, if we do not, by a patient continuance in well doing, seek the promised glory, honour and immortality; which if we do, we shall, through the grace of God, secure everlasting life. Vain will our knowledge and our profession otherwise be, and our testimony against the sins of others will only inflame the guilt of our own.

Let it ever be remembered, that the goodness of God, which we have such daily reason to acknowledge and adore, gently take us, as it were, by the hand, and leadeth to repentance; and while we continually live upon it, let us not act in contempt of it, or abuse it to our own inconceivable detriment. Is the wrath already laid up so small, that we should be increasing the treasure: Increasing the terrors of the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God?

It will be a most impartial, as well as important day. Nor are we concerned to know how the heathen will fare in it: let it suffice us, that if they are condemned, they will be righteously condemned; not for remaining ignorant of the gospel they never had an opportunity of hearing, but for violating those precepts of the Divine law which were inscribed on their consciences. Let us bless God that he has written it there, and reverence the traces of his hand on our own minds; always remembering, that the discoveries of revelation were never intended to erase or discredit the dictates of nature, but to illustrate and confirm them.

We shall be judged by the dispensation we have enjoyed; and men are to be judged by the gospel. He only means, that the gospel teaches such a judgment. Therefore, some transposing the last clause, render it very plainly and properly, In the day when God shall, according to my gospel, judge the secrets of men. Mr. Mace transposes the whole sixteenth verse to join it with the twelfth; and I think it very evident, the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth verses come in as a parenthesis: but the transposition of verses seems a dangerous thing; though, I think, in some evident cases, that of a few words may be pardoned, considering the different genius of ancient and modern, eastern and western, languages.

*Burges*
The Romans will have the charge upon the Jews, that they were sinners, as well as the Gentiles; and consequently stood in need of justification by the grace of the gospel, as well as they. Rom. II. 17, to the end.

Romans II. 17.

I HAVE hitherto been speaking of the inex- clusable guilt of those who have the greatest opportunity of knowing their duty, and in consequence of this acknowledge it, and condemn others for acting contrary to it; while yet they are guilty of the same evils. I will now keep on the reserve no longer; but will boldly declare, that in what I have said concerning such, I meant the conviction, not merely of heathen philosophers, but of wicked Jews; and if thou, O reader, art such an one, I apply myself personally to thee. Behold, thou bearest name of a Jew; and thou reposest thyself on the knowledge and profession of the law, as if that would save thee; and thou gloriest in the true God, in whom thou believest; as if thy descent and profession, by virtue of the peculiar covenant he made with thy fathers, must necessarily title thee to his favour. Thou boastest of it as thine honour and happiness, that thou knowest [his] will; not merely by uncertain conjecture and reasoning, but by an express revelation; and that thou accurately discernest and distinguishest upon things that differ, which untaught nature may in many respects

a Dearest the name of a Jew.] The apostle frequently addresses himself to unconverted Jews in this epistle, and especially here; for no doubt there were many of them at Rome, who might be curious to know, what he, who had been so violent an enemy to Christianity, would say to recommend it. And Paul’s great love to them engaged him, on the contingency of such an event, to insert such passages; and other passages are calculated for the conviction of other unbelievers, as well as for the edification of Christians.

b Discernest things that differ.] So Beza renders διαμαζεσα τας διαφορας; and Elsdon vindicates it in a manner which seems very satisfactory; though Capellus, Ham-
excellent, being instructed out of the law,

19 And art confident that thou thyself art a guide of the blind, a light of them which are in darkness.

20 An instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, which hast the form of knowledge and of the truth in the law.

21 Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? Thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal?

22 Thou that sayest, A man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? Thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege?

23 Thou that makest

Thou and the Gentiles, defend our translation, approvest things which are more excellent. See Elner, Observ. Vol. II. p. 17.

c Blind,—ignorant,—babes.] These were titles which the proud Jews often gave to the Gentiles.

d Form.] Ἐπίθυμως has this significa-

tion, 2 Tim. iii. 5. And Bos (Exercit. p. 100, 101) shews, that it often signifies the sketch, or outlines of a thing; which suits the interpretation here given better than he seems to apprehend.—L’Enfant renders it, having in the law the rule of knowledge and truth; but I know not whether Ἐπίθυμως ever signifies rule; and if the article has any force, it is in favour of the rendering we have preferred.

e Dost thou steal?] Grotius on this text proves from Josephus, that some of the Jewish priests lived by rapine, depriving others of their due share of the tithes, and even suffering them to perish for want; that others were guilty of gross uncleanness; and as for sacrilegiously robbing God and his altar, it had been complained of as early as Malachi’s days, Mal. i. 8, 10, 11. So that the instances are given with great propriety and judgment.
the law, as so excellent, and thinkest it such an honour to be acquainted with it, dost thou by the transgression of the law dishonour God, and act as if thou wert studying the declaration of his will, only to shew him, in a more presumptuous and contumacious manner, that thou dost not regard it? It is not an improbable supposition that I have now been making; for I, who have had an opportunity of knowing by long experience the temper and character of the Jewish people, know it to be such, that I will boldly say to their faces, "the name of the God of Israel, for which you profess so warm a zeal, is by your means blasphemed among the Gentiles, and his holy religion brought into contempt by your notorious and scandalous immoralities; as it is written in your own scriptures concerning your fathers, whose evil deeds you so generally imitate." (Compare 2 Sam. xii. 14; Isai. lii. 5; Ezek. xxxvi. 23.)

25 My duty absolutely requires me to give such cautions, and to make such remonstrances as these: for circumcision is indeed profitable, if a man keep the law: his being a Jew, if he be truly a good man, will give him many advantages for becoming a Christian; and were his obedience perfect, would inrile him to the blessings promised in the law. But if thou be a transgressor of the law, thy circumcision is in effect become uncircumcision: thou wilt have no more benefit by it than if thou hadst never received it; as thou well knowest, that according to the tenour of the law itself, circumcision, far from being any excuse for thy offence, will rather expose thee in many respects to a much greater punishment. And therefore, by a parity of reason, if the uncircumcision, that is, an uncircumcised person, observe and obey the greatest and most important precepts or righteous determinations of the law, though without any acquaintance with the book that contains them; if he faithfully and steadily conform himself to the main branches of virtue and rectitude it requires...
He is a Jew, that is one inwardly.

quires, shall not his uncircumcision be imputed or reckoned as circumcision? Shall he not be treated as favourably by God in his final account, as if he had been circumcised, when his not being so does not proceed from any contempt of the Divine authority, but from his knowing nothing of the rite, or not apprehending it in his particular circumstances to be his duty to practise it? Yea, it is certain, that the uncircumcision that is by nature, a man who continues uncircumcised as he was born, accomplishing the great moral purposes of the law, in subserviency to which its rituals were appointed, shall judge and condemn thee; who while thou actest by the letter of its ceremonial precepts, and retainest circumcision and all its appendages with the greatest exactness, art nevertheless, in things far more essential and important, a transgressor of the law, to the spiritual meaning and extent of which thou continuest an utter stranger, and which thou encouragest thyself, by these external observances to neglect. For upon the whole, as you would not allow any man to be truly a Jew, merely for any outward rites which he might observe, if he continued uncircumcised, how carefully soever he might conceal it; so must I freely declare to you, that he is not in the most sublime and important sense a Jew, that is, one of God's covenant and beloved people, who is merely so in outward shew, neither indeed [is that] the true circumcision which is apparent in the flesh.] Nothing merely ritual or ceremonial can recommend a man to the Divine favour; but he [is] a Jew, that is, one of God's chosen people, who is one in the hidden part, as David expresses it, (Psal. li. 6.) or in the secret recesses of the soul; and the acceptable circumcision, is that of the heart, which your own prophets so often inculcate, (see Deut. x. 16. xxx. 6. Jer. iv. 4.) when they urge the putting away all inward impurity and obstinacy, as that which is most highly offensive in the sight of God. This excellent circumcision is seated in the spirit, consisting of a change made there by the operation of the Divine Spirit himself, and not merely in an external conformity to the letter of the law, of which the worst of men may be capable. Now such a person, whatever his outward profession may be, is one, whose praise is not

27 And shall not uncircumcision which is by nature, if it fulfil the law, judge thee, who by the letter and circumcision dost transgress the law?

28 For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh:

29 But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in

VOL. III. Cc
Reflections on the vanity of a mere external relation.

Let our hearts be always attentive to these lessons of inward religion which the sacred oracles fail not continually to inculcate. It is the praise of God that is in question: and who can be so lost to all true greatness of mind, to all generous ambition, as that he should not long, and even burn to obtain it? Or who can enjoy, or attend to the praise of men, while he has any reason to fear that God condemns?

17 To have the name of a Jew, or of a Christian! How little will it signify: To boast in an external and temporary relation to God, if we are such as shall finally be disowned by him, will make us the more wretched. To have known his will, to have distinguished things that differ, and set up for instructors or reprovers of others, will only furnish out matter of condemnation from our own mouths; if, while teaching others, we teach not ourselves. Well may the punishment be aggravated, where the guilt is so great; when it brings so peculiar a reproach upon religion, and in effect dictates so many blasphemies against the name of God, at the very time it pretends to exalt it.

We pity the Gentiles, and we have reason to do it; for they are lamentably blind and dissolute: but let us take heed, lest those appearances of virtue, which are to be found among some of them, condemn us; who with the letter of the law, and the gospel, and with the solemn tokens of a covenant relation to God, transgress his precepts, and violate our engagements to him; so turning the means of goodness and happiness into the occasion of more aggravated guilt and misery.

Praise not of men, &c.] Perhaps here is a reference to the etymology of the word Jews; it being derived from the name of Judah, which signifies Praise. Compare Gen. xxix. 35. and xlix. 8.
Though the Jews had the oracles of God, and the promises;

SECT. VI.

After removing some objections, the sad case both of Jews and Gentiles is further illustrated; and the representation shown to be agreeable to the scriptures of the Old Testament, Rom. III. 1—19.

Romans III. 1. WHAT advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision;

2 Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God.

3 For what if some did not believe? shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect.

4 God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, That thou mightest

Romans III. 1. But some may be ready to object, "If it be so, that no circumcision, but that of the heart, will avail to men's final happiness; what then [is] the advantage of the Jew, or what the profit of circumcision, which yet you seemed to allow, when you said but just before, (chap. ii. 25,) that it in some circumstances profiteth?" Nor do I deny it now; I say that it pro. 2 fittest much every way, or in a variety of respects; as I shall hereafter more fully shew, (compare chap. ix. 4, 5,) and chiefly in that they, who have received it, have been intrusted with the oracles of God in the Divinely inspired scriptures, by which they are taught many important lessons, which may direct their lives, and dispose them to embrace the gospel, to the security of their final and everlasting salvation.

Of great importance indeed are these Divine oracles to this purpose. And what if some, and they a considerable number, of those who once possessed these invaluable treasures, believed them not, or did not duly consider what they speculatively believed, and so rejected the gospel to which they were intended to lead: Shall their unbelief disannul and enervate the faith of God; Shall it destroy his fidelity to his promises, or prevent our receiving them and owning their accomplishment, with becoming regard? God forbid, that we should insinuate any thing of this kind. No; let the blessed God ever be acknowledged to be true and faithful, though every man be

- The oracles of God.] This is so remarkable and important a testimony to the Divine inspiration of the Old Testament in general, that it can leave no doubt concerning the full persuasion of St. Paul upon this head.

- The faith of God.] This is an ambiguous expression, and may either signify, the fidelity of God, or that faith of ours which God has pointed out as the way of obtaining justification and life. The senses run at last into each other. I have included both; and hinted, in the last words of the paraphrase, at a sort of intermediate sense; as the attentive reader will observe.

- When
be esteemed a liar, and unfit to have any confidence reposed in him; as it is written, (Psal. li. 4.) "that thou mightest be justified in thy words, and mightest upon the whole overcome, when thou art called into judgment; that they, who insolently dare to arraign the equity of thy conduct, may soon meet with the confusion they deserve."

5 But a Jew may be ready farther to object, and say, "If our unrighteousness recommend the righteousness of God, and illustrate his perfections in that way of becoming righteous by faith, which he now ordinat; what shall we say, and what are we to expect? Is not God unrighteous, who inflicteth that wrath, which it is well known, you assert, he will execute upon the whole Jewish nation, for rejecting it?" I now speak as a man, who had a mind to cavil at the gospel, might plead, and by no means express my own sentiments, as you may well imagine.

6 No; God forbid, that I should harbour such a thought, or allow such a consequence. For how then should God judge the world? With Abraham our Father, I acknowledge him under the character of the judge of all the earth; and maintain that he will always "do right, (Gen. xviii. 25. And as for such a caviller, he might as well speak out, and say, If the truth of God hath abounded to his own glory by means of my lie; my falsehood and iniquity of any kind; if he has taken occasion to over-rule my offence to the accomplishment of his word, and the honour of his administration; why am I nevertheless called into judgment as a sinner, and arraigned for that as a crime, which is attended with such happy consequences?"

7 And why may I not say, (as we are calamitously, and some most injuriously affirm, that we maintain) "let us do evil things, that mightest he justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged."

5 But if our unrighteousness commend the righteousness of God, what shall we say? Is God unrighteous who taketh vengeance? (I speak as a man.)

6 God forbid: for then how shall God judge the world?

7 For if the truth of God hath more abounded through my lie unto his glory; why yet am I also judged as a sinner?

8 And not rather, as we be slanderously reported, and as some affirm

\[e\] When thou art called into judgment.] Ehler and Bos have abundantly shewn, that since 3:3 has this signification, compare Acts xxv. 23; xxvi. 6. and that even, in such a connection, signifies to carry the cause. See Ehler. Obscr. Vol. ii. p. 19, 19; and Bos in loc.

\[f\] The righteousness of God. Though the phrase be in itself ambiguous, I think Dr. Whitby has abundantly proved it has here the sense we give it.

\[g\] Of the truth of God, &c.] The Prussian Testament renders this clause, "in the mean time if my lie conduces to the glory of God, by making the grandeur of his truth shine forth with superior advantage," &c. This is the clear and genuine sense, but it is not consistent with the rule I generally follow to deviate so far from the words of the original; and I mention it as a specimen of many liberties, in which I have declined following that version after attentive examination of it.
It will be no excuse, that we do evil that good may come.

affirm that we say, Let us do evil, that good may come: whose damnation is just.

9 What then? are we better than they? no, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin;

10 As it is written, There is none righteous, no not one:

11 There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God:

that good consequences may come from them? You may easily see, that principles like these would justify the greatest crimes in the world, if they might be so over-ruled as to prove the occasion of good; and consequently would so entirely confound the nature of good and evil, that I think it not worth the while to argue with such persons; whose condemnation is indeed so apparently just, that I leave them to be convinced, and silenced, by their own consciences; and only mention such a detestable principle, solemnly to warn you against it.

But, to return from this long digression—If the question I mentioned before be repeated, and any say, "What then, upon the whole, have we Jews the advantage of the Gentiles so far, that in consequence of having these oracles of God which we have received, the promises which he will never fail to observe, and the principles of righteousness, which he will never himself violate in his conduct, we can claim justification before God by virtue of our obedience to his law?" Not at all; for we have before proved that Jews and Gentiles are all under sin, and have placed them as convicted criminals at the Divine bar; As it is written, (Psal. xiv. 1,) in a variety of passages which may be applied to the present occasion, There is none righteous, no not one; There is none that understandeth his duty and his true interest; there is none that seeketh after God, and constantly endeavoureth to secure his

That Which condemnation is just.] I think this must imply, that there are certain rules which God has laid down for us, disobedience to which in any imaginable circumstance is universally a moral evil; even though the quantity of good arising from thence to our fellow-creatures, should be greater than that arising from observing those rules. For if this be not allowed, there can be no shadow of force in the apostle's conclusion.

5 As it is written. These scriptures are collected from different parts of the Old Testament; but there are many editions of the Seventy in which they all stand together, in the sixth, or according to their order, xiiiith Psalm; which has given some occasion to think, that other alterations may have been made in that Greek version, to render it more agreeable to the New Testament; though many passages might escape the notice of such as made this attempt, if it were really made. But it must have been, as we see in this instance it was, a fruitless one; considering how wide such copies were dispersed, and how different the religious sentiments of the persons with whom they were lodged. It seems much more reasonable to account for the diversity we find between the original and quotations, by supposing the sense, rather than words, intentionally regarded; and some accidental alterations have happened since in the Hebrew copies, which in several places may make the difference greater than it originally was.

h There is none that seeketh after God, &c.] It is allowed, that this passage only proves directly, what was the character of the Jews in David's time; but it plainly shews that the wrath of God was awakened.
The Old Testament asserts the universal depravity of mankind

16. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no not one:

13 Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used the most mischievous deceit; and while they make the fairest profession of friendship, the mortal venom of asps is hid under their lips, which utter the most infectious and fatal slanders. (Psal. cxl. 3.) They are men whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness; (Psal. x. 7.) so that the most shocking profaneness mingles itself with that malignity of heart towards their fellow men, which breathes in every word. Their feet are swift to run towards the places where they have appointed to shed the blood of the innocent. (Prov. i. 16, 18.) Ruin and misery are on the whole in all their ways; they bring it upon others, and so, by an inevitable consequence, upon themselves at last. And as for the way of peace and happiness, they have not known or regarded it. (Isa. lix. 7, 8.) And to sum up all in one word, the great cause of all this degeneracy is, that the fear of God is not before their eyes, but they are utterly destitute of any true principle of religion, of any reverence and love to the great and adorable Object of it.” (Psal. xxxvi. 1.)

19 This, my brethren, is in general the sad character of mankind in their fallen state; and the representation is the more striking, as it is borrowed from the sacred writings. Now we know, that what the law saith in such passages as these, it saith to those that were under the law; they do

awakened against them, as well as others, for their sins: it proves also, that a general degeneracy might prevail among them, though by profession God’s people: and it suggests a strong presumption, that if Israel in David’s time, which was one of its best ages, was so bad, Gentile nations were still worse; and in all these views, it was much to the apostle’s purpose to produce the passage. The like observation is in a great measure applicable to all the following quotations: as the paraphrase on ver. 19, suggests, or rather, as the apostle himself there evidently insinuates.

1 What the law saith.] It appears here, that this word law doth sometimes signify the Old Testament in general; for not one of the quotations above is taken from the pentateuch.
do not immediately relate to the heathen, but contain the character of those that were at that time the professing people of God. And as most of these passages are borrowed from the writings of David, Solomon, or Isaiah, it appears, that even in the best days of their state, they had a great deal of enormous wickedness among them. And if Israel, even at such a time, could not justify itself, much less can it be imagined that the idolatrous nations of the Gentiles should be able to do it: so that every mouth must be stopped, and the whole world stand convicted before God as guilty, and acknowledge itself obnoxious to a dreadful sentence from his tribunal. Now I earnestly desire to bring every reader under a sense of this, as what is of the highest importance, in order to receiving the gospel with becoming gratitude and joy.

**IMPROVEMENT.**

Who can read this melancholy picture of human nature, copied by the hand of an apostle from the lines first drawn by inspired prophets, without deep humility, and lamentation? To this was it sunk, that there was none righteous, no not one; none disposed to seek after God, or to cultivate his fear. And from this bitter root, the apostasy of our nature from God, what detestable fruit proceeds! The throat which is like an open sepulchre, the deceitful tongue, the envenomed lips, the malicious heart, the murderous hand! And who can wonder, that such rebels to their heavenly Father should sometimes prove ruffians to their brethren!

Let us bless God that we have been preserved from falling into such enormities, and from falling by them. His grace has restrained us from sinning against him in such an aggravated manner; his Providence has guarded us from those whose feet are swift to shed blood, and in whose paths there is destruction and misery.

Let us remember the view in which these instances were brought; even to evince this deplorable, but undeniable fact, that Jews and Gentiles are all under sin. The purpose of conviction therefore being answered on our hearts, let us humble ourselves.
selves before God, as those that stand guilty in his presence, and obnoxious to his judgment.

Ver. Thankfuly let us own the inestimable goodness of God in having favoured us with his sacred oracles, and endeavour to improve in the knowledge of them. Thus instructed, let us be careful to form the most honourable notion of God, as the worthy and universal Judge, who will never fail to do right; and may these views of him produce an abhorrence of every thing evil which must necessarily be displeasing to him. Nor let us ever allow ourselves to be brought under the influence of those fallacious and pernicious maxims which would persuade us, that the goodness of the intention sanctifies the badness of the action; or that the pretended benevolence of the end will justify irregularities in the means. God’s judgment and decision is final; and an inspired apostle’s authority is an answer to a thousand subtleties, which might attempt to turn us from the strictest rules of that immutable rectitude on which it always proceeds.

SECT. VII.

From the representation made above, of the guilt and misery of mankind, the apostle deduces the necessity of seeking justification by the gospel, and consequently the excellency of that dispensation, as exhibiting the method of it. Rom. III. 20, to the end.

SECT. VII.

Romans III. 20.

I HAVE just been proposing to you convincing evidence of the universal degeneracy and corruption of mankind, and shewing you, that the whole world must stand convicted before God: therefore let all my readers be persuaded to admit it, as a most certain principle, and at all times to act upon it, that according to the just and humble acknowledgement of the Psalmist, (Psal. cxliii. 2,) no flesh shall be justified, or pronounced righteous, before him; by works of complete

a Be justified, &c.] The learned Vitringa hath with great propriety observed, that this word is borrowed from Psal. cxliii. 2, and must therefore signify to receive the testimony of being righteous from a judge, and cannot merely signify to obtain mercy. To be justified, also sometimes signifies to overcome in judgment, Psal. li. 4, and the expression of being just before God implies the same. And that this is the sense of the word in this epistle, appears from several passages; particularly Rom. ii. 3. So that on the whole, as he argues, justification is not a phrase parallel to forgiveness, but refers to a judicial process, and carries in it the idea of acquittal, praise, and reward. And indeed it seems to me always ultimately to refer to the being pronounced, and treated as righteous, in the great day of God’s universal judgment. See Rom. ii. 13, 16.

b By
The righteousness of God is manifested.

For by the law is the knowledge of sin.

21 But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets:

22 Even the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all, and upon all them that believe; for there is no difference;

By the works of the law.] I think with Mr. Locke, that the word law must here be taken in this extent, comprehending ceremonial and moral, revealed and natural. And this I conclude, not so much from the omission of the articles, (compare Rom. ii. 12, 14, 25, 27. chap. iii. 31; chap. v. 13, 20; in all which places, and many more, without the article signifies the Mosaic law, as the sense evidently proves,) but from the conclusion which the apostle draws, and the whole tenor of his subsequent argument; which would have very little weight, if there were room to object, though we cannot be justified by our obedience to the law of Moses, we may be justified by our obedience to God's natural law. And nothing can be more evident, than that the premises, from which this conclusion is drawn, refer to the Gentiles as well as the Jews; and consequently, that law has here and in many subsequent passages, that general sense. A very learned person has lately proposed to render הָסַדְּרִים בָּאָרָיָם by the law of works; pleading בְּאָרָיָם בָּאָרָיָם (Heb. vi. 2) as a parallel instance; but I have declined this rendering, as (ver. 27.) the apostle expresses the law of works by words placed in a different order, בְּאָרָיָם בָּאָרָיָם, opposed to בְּאָרָיָם בָּאָרָיָם and (ver. 28.) פָּתִיתָם בָּאָרָיָם is plainly, as we render it, without the works of the law; as the continuation of the apostle's argument, in reference to Abraham shews. Nor can I see what great end could be served by allowing this criticism; since the apostle elsewhere asserts justification פָּתִיתָם בָּאָרָיָם without works (chap. iv. 6.) And to say that בָּאָרָיָם is put elliptically for בָּאָרָיָם (that is works for the law of works) is very arbitrary. Nor can I conceive, that any one can be justified by the law of works, without being justified by the works; or vice versa; and this is expressly Paul's assertion, chap. iv. 4, 5.

c By the law is the knowledge of sin.] This strongly implies the broken and disjointed state of human nature, in consequence of which the precepts which God gives us, will, on the whole, only serve to convict us of guilt, but not to produce an obedience by which we can finally be acquitted and accepted. Some render it, the law takes cognizance of sin.

d Attested by the law and the prophets.] See in this view, Gen. xv. 6. Isa. liii. ult. Dan. ix. 24,
robe, is put upon all them that believe; whether they were, or were not, acquainted with, or subject to, the Mosaic law before their conversion to Christianity: for there is in this respect no difference at all between one believer and another. For all have sinned, as we demonstrated above, and come short of the glory of God: they have failed of rendering him that glory that was so justly his due, and thereby have not only made themselves unworthy the participation of glory and happiness with him, but stand exposed to his severe and dreadful displeasure:

And if any escape it, they are such, as being induced to embrace the gospel, are justified freely without pretending to plead any merit of their own, by his rich and sovereign grace, proposed there by virtue of that redemption and deliverance which is in Christ Jesus his well beloved Son:

Whom God hath in his infinite mercy proposed and exhibited to us in the gospel, as a propitiation through whom he may honourably discover himself as propitious to us, and converse favourably with us, as he did with Moses from the mercy seat: an inestimable privilege, which we receive by virtue of faith in his atoning blood, with which the throne of God is, as it were, sprinkled over; as the propitiatory in the tabernacle was with the blood of the sin-offering. (Lev. xvi. 15, 16.) And this is appointed for a demonstration of his righteousness in the remission of sins, which now appears to be accomplished without any reflection upon that awful attribute which might seem to have a claim so directly contrary to it; and this remission extends not only to the present, but former age, and to all the offences which are long since past, according to the forbearance of God, who has forborne to execute judgment upon sinners for their repeated provocations, in reference to which certainly signifies a deficiency of what might have been attained, rather than the loss of what is actually possessed. Compare Mat. xix. 20, 1 Cor. i. 7; Heb. iv. 1, xii. 13.

Some contend that παθίζει here signifies to exhibit; others, that it signifies to determine, intend, or fix upon. (Compare Rom. 1. 22.) I have chose the word practise, as having just the same ambiguity.
Boasting excluded, not by the law, but by faith.

To declare I say, at this time his righteousness; that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.

Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works; Nay: but by the law of faith.

Therefore we conclude, that a man, of whatever nation,

Just, and the justifier, &c.] By just, Mr. Taylor would understand merciful, and Mr. Locke, faithful to his promises; but either of these makes but a very cold sense, when compared with that we have here given. It is no way wonderful that God should be merciful, or faithful to his promises, though the justifier of believing sinners; but that he should be just in such an act might have seemed incredible, had we not received such an account of the propitiation and atonement. But our explication is vindicated in a most masterly and unanswerable manner by the worthy author of an excellent tract, intitled, Christ the Mediator, p. 89, &c. to which I with great pleasure refer the reader.
Justification is by grace through the blood of Christ.

nation, profession, or character, is justified by a true, lively, and effectual faith in the gospel, without the works of the law; that is, though destitute of any legal works, in consequence of which he could claim justification and life.

29 And this naturally leaves room to add, [Is God] who hath established such a method of justification, the God of the Jews only, and not also of the Gentiles? Surely he is the God of the Gentiles too: since it is very evident, that all claim from works being thus universally given up, the Jews and Gentiles must in this respect stand upon a level. So that [it is] one God, the same eternal and unchangeable Jehovah, that will justify the Jews, who have received circumcision, not by that, but by faith; and will justify the Gentiles too, who are still in their uncircumcision, through the same faith; and therefore demands the grateful love, and the new obedience of both.

30 Now while we maintain this method of justification and salvation, can it be said, that we derogate from the honour of God's justice or his law! Do we set aside the law by faith, as if it were a faulty, or annihilate it, as if it were an useless thing? God forbid, that we should ever insinuate such a design, or entertain such a thought. Nay, on the contrary, we really establish the law, on a firmer foundation than ever, and place it in a juster and more beautiful point of light: for we shew also its honour displayed in the atonement as well as the obedience of Christ; and we make it of everlasting use, for attesting the truth, and illustrating the necessity of the gospel, as well as for directing the lives of men, when they profess to have received it; as we shall abundantly shew in the process of this discourse.

IMPROVE-

A lively and effectual faith, without works, &c.] By thus guarding the assertion we sufficiently see how very consistent it is with that of St. James, (chap. ii. 17, 23, 25,) who only in effect asserts that no faith can suffice to our justification which is not in fact productive of obedience; and when the matter is thus stated, there is no appearance of contradiction.

One God, who justifieth the circumcision by faith, an uncircumcision through faith.] Mr. Locke would render it, seeing God is one, and supposes it an allusion to the prediction, Zech. xiv. 9, that the Lord shall be one, and his name one; fulfilled by the publication of the gospel. But I think this supposed allusion far fetched, and see no occasion for supposing in πίστις, by faith, and ἐν πίστει, through faith, to signify different things; nor can I see what different idea can here be affixed to them. L'Enfant renders it, he will justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision by the same faith.

We establish the law.] Some render it, Nay, but we are the persons that observe the law; which is a just and strong thought, (compare Rom. viii. 3, 4,) but I think not the proper signification of ἐπισκοπούμενος. For the justice of this inference see Christ the Med, p. 92-96.
Abraham was not justified by works;

IMPROVEMENT.

Let our whole souls rejoice in the glorious display of the Divine mercy, in so beautiful an harmony with Divine justice, in our redemption by Christ: to which the apostle in this section Ver. bears so noble a testimony. We are all become guilty before God: so that if he should mark iniquity, no flesh living could be justified before him: let us therefore with all reverence and esteem, and with all joy, embrace the righteousness of God, as now attested by the law and prophets, by Christ and his apostles; which shall be upon all believers without any difference: humbling ourselves deeply in the presence of God, as those who have sinned, and come short of his glory; and seeking to be justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.

To him let us continually look, as the great propitiation; exercising faith in his blood, and rejoicing that those which seemed to our feeble apprehensions the most jarring attributes, are now reconciled and glorified. Let us readily acknowledge that boasting is excluded; and in the grateful overflowings of our souls fall down before that throne whence pardons are dispensed, and confess, “that this act of grace is our only plea;” and that we must remain humble before God for ever, in a sense of the demerit of our sins, and the abundance of his mercy.

Let Jews and Gentiles unite in thanksgivings to God, and in love to each other, as having been all involved in the same condemnation, and all partakers of the same compassion. And let Christians remember, that God intended by this illustrious display of grace, not to supersede, but to establish his law. May we therefore make it our concern, that not only the actions of our lives, but the sentiments of our hearts, be directed and determined by it; as it is now inforced by more powerful motives than when it appeared in its unallayed terrors.

SECT. VIII.

The Apostle here shews, that Abraham and David sought justification in such a way as the gospel recommends; that is, by faith. Rom. IV. I—12

Romans IV. 1. WHAT shall we say then that Abraham, I HAVE been observing to you, that we Christians, by maintaining the doctrine of justification by faith, instead of superseding and enervating, do indeed establish the Divine law, and assert

Rom. IV. 1.
assert in the most convincing manner both its authority and purity. For the illustration of this therefore, let us consider the important instance of Abraham, and the manner in which he was justified. What then shall we say, that the holy patriarch Abraham our revered father, according to the flesh, hath found effectual in this respect? and to what must his justification and acceptance with God be ascribed? For if Abraham were justified by circumcision, or by the merit of any other works, rather than by the free grace and mercy of God, then he hath something in which he may glory: but it is certain, by what the sacred oracles express, that though the behaviour of this celebrated person was indeed innocent, fair and honourable before men, yet [he hath] not any thing to boast in the sight of God. For what saith the scripture upon this head? (Gen. xv. 6.) Abraham believed God, "when he made him the promise of that miraculous and important Seed, and so it was imputed to him, or placed to his account, for righteousness, or in order to his justification," that is, God was pleased graciously to accept it, though he had not that complete and perfect righteousness which might in strict justice be demanded of every rational creature, as the only condition of his being acquitted at the Divine bar. Now to him who thus worketh to the utmost extent of all that was required, the reward proportioned to that work is not charged to account, as matter of grace, but of debt; and he may glory, at least in having diligently earned it. (Compare chap. xi. 6.) But to him

a Hath found.] Some would transpose the words, and render them, "Shall we say that our father Abraham hath found, that is, obtained justification and life, according to the flesh, that is, by circumcision, and observing the carnal rites of the Mosaic economy?" But when the natural order, and usual import of the phrase makes so easy and so good a sense, I can see no reason for admitting this construction. Raphelius says, that Hecrodus, and other ancient Greek authors, use is now for obtaining, and that by merit. Anot. ex Herod. in Loc.

b He hath something in which he may glory.] This seems to intimate, that the Jews maintained not only the necessity, but the merit of the Jewish observances; else it might have been replied, that Abraham was indeed justified upon his being circumcised, but that it was by the grace of God, in freely annexing the promise of justification and life to such a rite.

c As of grace.] Raphelius has shown, that μητοξρεῖν doth not only signify a reward of debt, but also a gift of favour: and that the phrase μητοξρεῖν occurs in Herodotus; so that a reward of grace or favour is a classical as well as theological expression. —Could we be sure that Abraham was once an idolator, it would be some illustration of the apostle's reasoning here; but the validity of it by no means depends upon that fact.

d Whose
worketh not, but believeth on him, that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.

6 Even as David also described the blessedness of the man unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works;

7 Saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered:

8 Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.

9 Cometh this blessedness then upon the circumcision only, or upon the uncircumcision also? For we say that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness.

10 How was it then reckoned to him for righteousness? I think nothing can be easier, than to understand how this may be said in full consistence with our being justified by the imputation of the righteousness of Christ, that is, our being treated by God as righteous, for the sake of what he has done and suffered: for though this be the meritorious cause of our acceptance with God, yet faith may be said to be imputed to us by the apostle, in order to our being justified, or becoming righteous; that is, according to the view in which I have elsewhere more largely stated it, as we are charged as debtors in the book of God's account, what Christ has done, in fulfilling all righteousness for us, is charged as the grand balance of the account;
Reflections on the happiness of a justified state.

sect. viii.
Rom. iv. 10.

Thus imputed, and charged to his account, in this view? When he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? [Truly] the history plainly shews us, that it was not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision; for it relates this important circumstance of Abraham, as taking place many years before circumcision was instituted.

11 And it assures us, that he received the sign of circumcision, not as the means of making him acceptable to God when he was not before so, but as the token of his being already accepted; and therefore as the seal of the righteousness of that faith which he had in uncircumcision: that so he might be the father of all those who believe in uncircumcision, that righteousness may also be imputed unto them, that they may be justified in the same means, and that it may be written down in the book of God's remembrance.

12 That they are so. And he received this rite by Divine appointment, that he might also be the father of circumcision, that is, to those who should afterwards practise it, and were not only partakers of the external ceremony of circumcision, which in itself indeed can have no efficacy; but shall also walk in the footsteps of that faith of our father Abraham, which he had in uncircumcision, and which rendered him so dear to God while he was in that state.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. If there be indeed such a thing as happiness to be enjoyed by mortal man, it is the portion of that man of whom David speaks, even of him whose iniquity is pardoned, and whose sin is covered, and who enjoys the manifestation of that pardon. Well may he endure the greatest afflictions of life with cheerfulness, and look

account; but that it may appear, that we are, according to the tenor of the gospel, intituled to the benefit of this, it is also entered in the book of God's remembrance, "that we are believers;" and, this appearing, we are graciously discharged, yea, and rewarded, as if we ourselves had been perfectly innocent and obedient.

See my Sermons on Salvation by Grace, p. 14-19, which account is perfectly agreeable to what Whitius has remarked, Decons. Todi. lib. iii. chap. viii. § 36.

[Many years before circumcision was instituted.] It is said this imputation was made on Abraham's believing the promise, Gen. xv. 6, about a year before the birth of Ishmael; but he did not receive circumcision till Ishmael was thirteen years old, Gen. xvii. 27, consequently, Abraham was declared justified at least fourteen years before he was circumcised.

5 Seal of the righteousness of faith.] This seems an uncontestable proof, that circumcision was a seal of the covenant of grace, and not merely of temporal promises; and consequently obviates the most considerable objection that hath ever been urged against infant-baptism.
look forward to death with comfort; when the sting of all these evils is taken out, and the returning tokens of the Divine favour convert them into blessings. O let us earnestly pray that this Ver. 11 happiness may be ours: that the great and glorious Being whom by our sins we have offended, and in whom alone the right and power of pardon resides, would spread the veil of his mercy over our provocations, and blot them out of the book of his remembrance!

Let us on the one hand fix it in our mind, that it is the character of that man to whom this blessedness belongs, that in his spirit there is no guile; and on the other, let us often reflect, that it is in consequence of a righteousness which God imputes, and which faith receives and embraces. We are saved by a scheme that allows us not to mention any works of our own, as if we had wherein to glory before God, but teaches us to ascribe our salvation to believing on him who justifieth the ungodly. Nor need we be ashamed of lying to such a method to which Abraham the father of the faithful had recourse himself, and on which he built his eternal hope. May we share his disposition of mind, that we may inherit the same promises: walking in the footsteps of our father Abraham. So shall we also be called the friends and children of God, and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in his heavenly kingdom.

SECT. IX.

In order to recommend the scheme of justification, by believing God's promises, the Apostle shows, that it was an illustrious act of faith, which entailed everlasting honours on the great patriarch Abraham in which he was intended for an example to us. Rom. IV. 13, to the end.

Romans IV. 13.

For the promise that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law,

Romans IV. 13.

I HAVE spoken of Abraham as the father of uncircumcised believers, as well as those of the circumcision, (ver. 11, 12,) and that with evident propriety; for the promise to Abraham and his seed, that he should be heir of the world; that is, that he should inherit all the nations of the

Heir of the world.] Κοσμιον cannot here signify, as γη sometimes does, one country, or land, how fine or large soever. It must therefore imply his inheriting a seed out of all nations, whom he might be said to possess, in such a sense, as children are said to be an heritage, Psal. cxxvii. 3. Compare Gen. iv. 1; Prov. xvii. 6. See also Psal. lxxxii. 8, where God is said to inherit the nations that are taken into his family on the profession of the true religion.

b Cannot
The promise was, that he should be a father of many nations.

Rom. IV. 13. the earth, as a seed that should be blessed in him, was not, and could not be by the law of circumcision, or of Moses; being, as we have already observed, prior to both; but it was by the righteousness of faith. God gave him that promise on his exerting a remarkable act of faith, on which God in the most gracious and honourable manner declared his acceptance of him as righteous. Now if they who are of the law, and depend upon that alone, [are] heirs, exclusive of all others, (as some so eagerly contend,) then that faith, which in the instance before us was so eminently honoured of God, is made useless, and treated as a thing of no value; and so the promise made to it is in effect abrogated, the performance of it being put, not only on new conditions, but on such as cannot be perfectly performed in this sinful state. For the law of God, considered in itself alone, and without any regard to that grace, which, though it was in fact mingled with it, yet makes no part of the legal dispensation as such; is so extensive and difficult, and we are so weak and sinful, that in fact, instead of securing to us the promised blessings, it only worketh wrath, that is, it becomes to us accidentally an occasion of wrath and exposes us to punishment as transgressors; for where there is no law, either revealed or intimated, [there is] no transgression; but the multiplication of precepts increases the danger of offending, and the clearer declaration of those precepts aggravates the guilt attending the violation.

16 But therefore [it,] that is, the promise, and the inheritance to which it relates, [is] of faith, or annexed to it, that it [might be] of grace, that God might magnify the riches of his grace in proposing justification and life to us in a way that might in multitudes of instances be effectual; that so the blessing exhibited in the promise might be firm, and secure to all the believing seed; not only to that part of his descendants which was placed under the dispensation of the Jewish law, who are not indeed excluded from it, if they seek law, but through the righteousness of faith.

14 For if they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect:

15 Because the law worketh wrath: for where no law is, there is no transgression.

16 Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed, not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is

b Cannot be perfectly performed.] This is here said with reference to a moral impossibility. It seems evident from what follows, that the law is to be considered as insisting on an obedience absolutely perfect, so that these good men who were justified under it, were not justified by it, but by the dispensation of grace under which Abraham was, which, though not a part of the covenant of God by Moses, was not, and could not be, abrogated by it. Compare Gal. iii. 17.
As Abraham was, so are we, justified by faith.

17 (As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations,) before him whom he believed, even God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were:

18 Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations; according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be.

19 And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb.

20 He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God;

21 And being fully persuaded, that what he had promised; he was able also to perform.

faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all;

seek it in a proper manner: but to that which is the seed of that holy patriarch, to whom the promise was made, by a nobler relation, even by a participation of the faith of Abraham, who is in this view the father of us all: As it is written, (Gen. xvii. 6.) I have made thee a father, not of one family alone to descend from Isaac, or Jacob, but of many nations; so that he is in some degree even like God himself, who is the Father of all good men; like that Almighty Being in whom he believed, as re-animating those who are dead, and calling into action and enjoyment things that are not now in existence, with the same ease as those that are.

And since I have begun to touch upon it, permit me, my brethren, to animate your faith, by dilating a little farther upon that of this illustrious patriarch. It was he, who against all human and probable hope, believed with an assured and joyful hope, on the security of the Divine word, that, unlikely as it seemed, he should be a father of many nations, according to that which was spoken to him (Gen. xv. 5) when he was called to take a view of the stars of heaven, and God said, "So numerous and glorious shall thy seed be." And having received such a promise, not being fickle in faith, how ficklesoever he might be in his animal constitution, he considered not his own body, which with regard to the probability of begetting children was now dead, being about an hundred years old: nor the deadness of Sarah's womb, of whom the sacred historian tells us, "that it ceased to be with her after the manner of women" (Gen. xviii. 11.) Amidst all these difficulties and discouragements, he objected not to the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened by the exercise of the most vigorous and triumphant faith, thereby giving a due and becoming glory to the great God, the Lord of universal nature; And was confidently persuaded, that what he had thus graciously promised, he was, and ever is, able to perform, though that performance should to sensible view seem ever so improbable.

And

c Like God.] So I think ἁλανταία may here signify; and accordingly it is rendered, at instar Dei by Paræus.

d Calling things that are not.] That this is to be understood of summoning them, as it were, to rise into being, and appear before him, Elsner has well proved on this place.

e Fully
And therefore this heroic faith was so acceptable to the Divine Being, that it was, as we have heard again and again, imputed or accounted to him for righteousness, that is, in order to his justification. Neither was it written in the sacred records, which are to reach the remotest ages, with regard to him only, or chiefly to do a personal honour to that illustrious patriarch, that it was thus imputed to him; But also for our sakes, to whom it, that is, the like faith, shall also be imputed, if we steadily believe in him who not only brought Isaac as from the dead womb of Sarah, but, in the most literal sense, raised Jesus our Lord from the dead, when he lay among them slain and mangled by his cruel enemies; Even that great and glorious Redeemer, who was delivered up to them by the determinate counsel of God, that by his death and sufferings he might atone for our many offences, and when he had fully satisfied the Divine justice for them, was raised again for our justification: that putting our trust in him, who was thus apparently discharged from all farther claim upon him, as our surety we might obtain, by virtue of our relation to him, plenary pardon and eternal life.

IMPROVEMENT

Let us continually bear in our mind the great and venerable example of our father Abraham: labour to the utmost to trace Ver. his steps; and have faith in God, who at his pleasure quickeneth the dead, and calleth things which are not as if they were. If sense were to judge, it would pronounce many of these difficulties invincible, which lie in the way of the accomplishment of his promises; but they shall all be fulfilled in their season. Let us therefore be strong in faith, remembering that thus it becomes us to glorify that God who condescends so far as to engage the honour of his word for the support of our souls. He who hath promised

...
is able to perform, for with him all things are possible. Already
hath he done that for us which we had much less reason to expect,
than we now have to hope for any thing that remains. He delivered
his son Jesus for our offences, to redeem us by his blood from final
and everlasting ruin.

Let it be our daily joy that he was raised again for our justifica-
tion; and let his resurrection be continually considered as a noble
argument to establish our faith in him who performed this illus-
trious work of power and mercy. So shall it be imputed to us like-
wise for righteousness; yea, so shall the righteousness of our Re-
demer be reckoned as ours, to all the purposes of our justification
and acceptance with God. And though, by our transgression of
the law, we can never inherit by any claim from that, which
only工作者 wrath and condemnation in consequence of our breach of it; yet shall we, by believing and obeying the gospel,
find the promise sure to us, as the spiritual seed of Abraham, and
be for ever happy in the enjoyment of that better Canaan; when
every earthly inheritance shall be no more found.

SECT. X.

The excellency of the gospel dispensation is farther illustrated: be-
lievers being hereby brought into so happy a state, as turns even
the heaviest afflictions of life into an occasion of joy. Rom. V.

ROMANS V. 1.

Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God,
through our Lord Jesus Christ.

ROMANS. V. 1.

We have been reviewing the manner in which Abraham and David, these illustri-
ous patriarchs, looked for justification and happiness, and in which we are to seek it, if we
desire to succeed. We have been speaking of our adorable Saviour, as delivered for our of-
ences, and raised again for our justification. Let us now therefore reflect a little on those
invaluable benefits, which we who have embraced this dispensation, whether Jews or Gen-
tiles, enjoy in consequence of it. And here it is in the first place evident, that being thus justi-
fi d by means of faith in Christ, we have peace with God. Our guilty fears are silenced, and

2 We have peace with God.] It seems very unreasonable to suppose, that when
the apostle wrote such passages as this, and Eph. i. 1—3, he should mean to ex-
clude himself, who was no Gentile; they are not therefore to be expounded, as
spoken particularly of the Gentiles: nor could he surely intend by these grand
descriptions, and pathetic representations, to speak only of such external privi-
We rejoice in the fruits.

We are taught to look up to him with sweet serenity of soul, while we no longer conceive of him as an enemy, but under the endearing character of a friend, and a father; even through the mediation and grace of our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom we have been introduced by means of faith into that state of grace and acceptance in which we now stand with humble boldness in his presence, and cheerful confidence, that nothing shall remove us from his favour. And by a farther consequence, we do not only rejoice in some considerable present privileges, but boast in a pleasant and assured hope of inheriting at length the glory of God; a state of perpetual splendor and happiness in the house and presence of our heavenly Father, in which he will, as it were, adorn us with the rays of his own glory. And not only do we so boast in this hope, but we also glory in our tribulation and affliction, which far from esteeming, as the Jews are ready to do, any token of reprobation or displeasure, we look upon as being, in this connection, the allotment of God’s paternal love to us; that we may thereby be enabled to do him a more singular honour, and be prepared for a more exalted happiness; knowing that tribulation, under the influence of Divine grace, worketh a calm, silent, humble patience, a most beautiful and happy disposition as might have been common to Simon Magnus, or any other hypocritical and wicked professor of Christianity. And if he did not intend this, he must speak of all true Christians as such; and as taking it for granted, that those to whom he addressed this, and his other epistles, were in the general such, though there might be some few excepted cases which he does not think it necessary often to touch upon. And this is, after all, the true key to such passages in his epistles; and as such, I have used throughout my work; and as I have more particularly stated and vindicated it in the preface which I have added to the preface of my Sermons on Regeneration in the second edition, I must beg leave to refer my reader thither, and hope I shall be excused from a more particular examination of that very different scheme of interpretation which Mr. Taylor has so laboriously attempted to revive. The main principles of it are, I think, well confirmed by my pious and worthy friend. Dr. Guage, in the preface to his Paraphrase of this Epistle.

2 By whom also we have access by faith into this grace where-in we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

3 And not only so, but we glory in tribulation also; knowing that tribulation worketh patience:

4 We have been introduced, μεν ἐν θάνατι. Hophelius has shown from θάνατος, that θάνατος is often used as a sacerdotal phrase, and signifies “being with great solemnity introduced, as into the more immediate presence of a deity in his temple, so as by a supposed interpreter, from hence called ἐν θάνατος, the introducer, to have a kind of conference with such a deity.”

5 We glory also in tribulation.] The Jews might object to the persecution of Christians, (as we know they did to that of their master,) as inconsistent with what they concluded would be the state of the people of the Messiah. It is therefore with great propriety, that the apostle so often discourses on the benefit arising from the sufferings of true believers, by which he lays in the strongest answer to any such insinuation. And this delicacy of address is so apparent in many passages of the epistles, that I should swell the notes too much if I were accurately to trace it.

Proof
4 And patience, experience; and experience hope:

5 And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts, by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.

6 For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.

Disposition of mind, which is daily strengthened by exercise. And this patience produceth such an experience of God’s supporting goodness, and such proof of our own sincere faith, strict integrity, and steady resolution, for him, as we are sure will be acceptable to him; and therefore this experience and proof of our graces, which like pure gold brighten in the furnace, worketh a more lively and triumphant hope of a glorious future reward. And this hope, sublimes and confident as it is, does not shame and confound [us] with disappointment; yea we know it cannot, because we have already within ourselves the very beginning of that heaven at which it aspires. For the love of God, in the perfection of which the blessedness of that celestial world consists, is, in a plentiful effusion, poured into our hearts by his Holy Spirit, which is given unto us, and enables us to see his love amidst all his corrections, and to delight ourselves daily in him; though for the present he appoints us trials which may seem ever so rigorous.

Now all these invaluable privileges and hopes, which make our lives so joyful amidst such various tribulations and extreme sufferings, are to be traced up to the death of Christ, and resolved into his love: for when we were yet in a weak and languishing, infirm and helpless state, constituent of all these Divine principles and hopes; yea incapable of delivering ourselves from the depths of guilt and misery, into which we were plunged; Christ most seasonably died for us, even in the stead of the ungodly, for Jews and Gentiles.

d Proof of our faith.] Mons. Saurin very justly observes, that the word 

then signifies, and is a metaphor taken from gold proved by purifying fire. Compare 1 Pet. i. 7; see Exclus. ii. 5. Sacr. Sacra. Vol. V. I. p. 159.

5 Died in the stead of the ungodly.] By ungodly here, Mr. Locke understands Gentiles; as also by weak, sinners, enemies, &c. They are undoubtedly included; but it seems very inconsistent with the whole strain of the apostle’s argument in the preceding chapters, to confine it to them. Compare chap. iii. 9–20, 22, 24; chap. iv. 5; chap. v. 20. I therefore all along explain such passages in the most extensive sense; and think nothing in the whole New Testament plainer, than that the gospel supposes every human creature to whom it is addressed, to be in a state of guilt and condemnation, and incapable of being accepted with God, any otherwise than through the grace and mercy which it proclaims. Compare John iii. 16, 36; chap. v. 24; 1 John iii. 14; Mark xvi. 15, 16; Luke xxiv. 47; and especially 1 John i. 10; than which no assertion can be more positive and express, Albert. (Obsyr. Sacra. p. 304.) has well proved that xai Kata w*y| should be rendered seasonably; and Raphaelius (Non ex. Xen. in ver. 8,) has abundantly demonstrated, that xai Kata entopan signifies he died in our room and stead: nor can I ever find, that entopan entopan has ever any other signification than that of rescuing the life.
Justified by Christ's death, we shall be saved by his life.

Gentiles, when they were, as we have proved before, all under sin.

Now this is a most memorable thing, and worthy our frequent, attentive, and affectionate consideration. For scarcely would one be willing to die in the stead of a righteous man, though we apprehended him in the most immediate danger; [if] perhaps in the stead of a remarkable good and benevolent man, one would even dare to die: for certainly it is but here and there one, in a great multitude, who would be willing to redeem the most eminently useful life at the price of his own. But God hath recommended his astonishing love towards us, and set it off as it were with this grand circumstance of high embellishment, if I may so speak, that when we were yet sinners, and therefore not only undeserving of his favour, but justly obnoxious to wrath and punishment, Christ died in our stead, that our guilt might be cancelled, and we brought into a state of Divine acceptance.

Since therefore it hath pleased the blessed God to give us such an unexampled display of his love as this, how high may our expectation rise, and how cheerfully may we conclude that much more being now justified by the efficacy of his most precious blood, we shall be saved from wrath by him! For we can never imagine that God would provide at so expensive a rate for our justification, and then finally leave us under

of another at the expense of our own; and the very next verse shews, independant on any other authority, how evidently it bears that sense here; as one can hardly imagine any one would die for a good man, unless it were to redeem his life by giving up his own. How much higher, not only Grotius, but Le Clerc, carried their explications of this great doctrine, than some moderns have done, may be seen by consulting Grotius's gloss on 1 Pet. ii. 19. de Satisf. cap. ix.) and Le Clerc on John i. 29.

Now; ye[.] It is very evident, that ye cannot have the force of an illustrative particle here, or in the preceding verse; and it is hardly possible to number all the passages in Paul's writings, to which the like remark may be applied.

Righteous—good.] It is true, that in one sense righteousness must include goodness, as we owe to every man a benevolent affection, and are bound in duty to God to do all the good we can to the whole human species. But he may in common speech be called a just or righteous man who gives to every one what is by law his due: and he a good or benevolent man who voluntarily abounds in kind and generous actions, to which no human laws can compel him. Tully has the like distinction, (de Office. lib. 1 chap. x. edit. Tierc.) and it is admirably illustrated by Nepholus, (Not ex. Xen. in loc.) by apposite quotations from other ancient writers. It may very possibly, (as Godseyn has shown in his Jewish Antiquities, lib. 1 cap. ix.) bear some allusion to a distribution of mankind into the three classes, דָּּּוֹרֵם, מֶּּּפָּרֵד, and מֶּּּשֶׁרי, good men, righteous men and sinners, which some rabbinical writers mention.—All the beauty and grace, of this passage is lost, by reading שָׁמֶּּּר instead of שָׁמֶּּּר, as the editor of the new version of 1727 does; without, as I can find, any single authority: for a wicked man no one would willingly die, though for a benefactor some have readily offered to die. And ayahs does not signify merely a personal benefactor, but in general a benevolent man.
under wrath; though we have acquiesced in the scheme of his grace for our deliverance.

For if, as I have already maintained, when we were enemies, through the perverseness of our minds, and the rebellion of our lives, we were reconciled to God by the death of his own dear Son, and if foreseeing we should fall into this state of hostility, he made this wonderful provision for our being admitted to terms of peace; how much more being thus reconciled, shall we be saved from misery, and made completely happy by his recovered life, now he is risen from the dead, and ascended to glory.

**IMPROVEMENT.**

With what extasies of holy joy may we justly survey these inestimable privileges, and blessed consequences of having embraced the gospel, and being justified by faith unfeigned! How great a happiness to have peace with God, with that omnipotent Being, who can at pleasure arm all nature against us, or for us! To have access to him by Jesus Christ, and daily converse with him as our Father in heaven! To rejoice in an assured hope of enjoying glory with Christ, in his presence; yea, of enjoying the God of glory. To see all affliction not only disarmed, but turned into matter of triumph, while tribulation worketh experience, patience, and hope! So may all our tribulations work, and be they ever so severe, they will be reasons for our joy and praise. The pain of them will soon be over; the happy consequences of them will be as lasting as our immortal souls.

Let us endeavour to dilate our hearts, that we may receive the largest effusions of the love of God, to be shed abroad there. The love of God! That plant of paradise, which will spring up unto eternal life. And to excite it, let us be daily meditating upon the rich wonders of redeeming love and grace; adoring that seasonable interposition of Divine mercy, that when we were weak and guilty creatures, when we lay for ever helpless under a sentence of everlasting condemnation, that is, when we appeared thus in the eyes of him who beheldeth things which are not as if they were, Christ died for us, and gave a token of his love even for the worst of sinners, which few among the children of men are willing to give, with respect to the most upright and benevolent of their brethren. Since the love of God comes thus recommended, let us cordially embrace it, and awaken all the powers of our souls to a diligent care to secure the happy fruits; that we may not receive the grace of God in vain. If we do indeed experience in ourselves
We glory in God, through Jesus Christ.

sect. x.

ourselves, not only that there is a foundation laid for reconciliation, but that we are actually reconciled to God by the death of his Son, our hopes may rise high, that we shall much more obtain consummate salvation by his life. For surely it is infinitely more astonishing, that the Son of God should die to reconcile enemies, than that having subdued their hearts by his dying love, and received them to friendship as the purchase of his blood, he should employ his recovered life and extensive authority for their protection, and complete salvation.

sect. xi.

The Apostle shews, that the calamities brought by the first Adam on his seed, are repaired with glorious advantage to all who by faith become interested in the second Adam. Rom. V. 11, to the end.

Romans V. 11.

I have been breathing out our hopes, and our joys, as we are Christians, and are taught by the principles of our Divine religion to rejoice, not only in the prospect of glory, but even in tribulation itself. And now I must add, that it is not only [so] but that there is another grand consideration, which, though not yet mentioned, lies at the root of all our confidence and happiness; which is this, that we boast in God as invariably our covenant God and Father, through Jesus Christ our Lord, by whom we have now, in these late times, received the great and important reconciliation, which not only averts the terrors of his wrath, but opens upon us all the blessings of his perpetual friendship and love.

12 And therefore we may from these premises infer, that the benefits which we believers receive from Christ, is equal to the detriment we

* Received the reconciliation.] The word καταλαλασις here has so apparent a reference to καταλαλασις and καταλαλασις in the preceding verse, that it is surprising it should have been rendered by so different a word in our version; especially as it is so improper to speak of our receiving an atonement, which God receives as made for our sins.

b Therefore.] Αυτο γαρ certainly does often signify in this respect; but there are some instances even among the texts collected by Mr. Taylor here, in which it may as well be rendered therefore: particularly Mat. xiii. 15; John ix. 23; chap. xii. 18; chap. xiii. 2; 1 Cor. iv. 17; chap. xi. 30; Eph. i. 15. In all which places our rendering seems preferable to what he would propose.

c We believers.] As this 12th verse is an inference from the 11th, it seems evident that they only are spoken of; for it is plain from comparing the 9th, 10th and 11th verses with the first, that it is only they who are justified by faith, who have peace with God, and who joy in him by...
For though by the one offence of Adam death came,

we receive from Adam; yea, is on the whole greater than that; for we now obtain righteousness and life from one; as by one man, that is, Adam, the common father of the human species, sin entered into the new made world, and death, before unknown, in the creation of God, entered by sin; and so death passed on from one generation to another upon all men; unto which all have sinned in him; that is, they are so far involved in the consequence of his first transgression, as by means of it to become obnoxious to death. And that this was indeed the case, and this offence the engine of mortality in the whole human species, we may infer from one very obvious fact, I mean the death of Infants, from the very beginning; for from the fall of Adam unto the time when God gave the law by Moses, as well as after it, sin was, and appeared to be in the world, by the continual execution of its punishment, that is, death. But it is a self-evident principle, that sin is not, and cannot be, imputed, where there is no law; since the very essence of sin is the violation of a law. And consequently, if we see in fact that sin was imputed, we must conclude that the persons to whose account it appears to have been charged, were under some law. Nevertheless, it is certain death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over infants as well as others, over those, I say, who had not sinned, according to the likeness of the transgression of Adam; that is, who had never in their own persons offended God, as Adam their father did; who, with respect to the extent of his actions to all his seed, was the figure, or model

by Christ as having received the reconciliation. And this obvious remark clears the following passage of difficulties, which would be exceeding great, if it were to be considered without regard to this connection, and which have in fact misled many commentators: who for want of attending to it, have plunged themselves and their readers into great perplexity, and given a sense to the paragraph, of which it is by no means capable.

unto which all have sinner: εἰ τις ἰδρυθής ἑαυτῷ εἰσέλθῃ. [Elsner (Observ. Vol. II. p. 26,) would render it, on account of whom; and he produces some remarkable authorities for it, (compare Phil. iii. 12; Rom. x. 13; chap. xvi. 19; 1 Thess. iii. 7;) but I think those produced by Mr. Taylor, (from Gal. v. 13; Eph. ii. 19; 1 Thess. iv. 7; 2 Tim. ii. 14;) with the use of the particles in some of the purest Greek classics, sufficient to support his rendering, which I have here followed. See his Scripture Doctrine of Original Sin, Part I. p. 51, &c. Note.]

similitude of Adam's transgression.] Mr. Locke and several more interpret this of the Gentiles, who did not sin against a positive law. But they might certainly have died for their transgression against the natural law, under which they were born, and for which the apostle expressly asserts, not only that they were in fact liable to perish, (chap. ii. 12, &c.) but that they knew they were worthy of death, (chap. i. ult.)

Figure,
model of him who was to come, that is, a kind of type of the Messiah, as being a public person and federal head.

**Rom. V. 15.** Yet I must observe by the way, that with respect to the free-gift of God in the gospel-dispensation, it [is] not exactly as the offence, nor limited in all respects as that is; for if by the offence of one many died, if the whole human family, numerous as it is, become obnoxious to death and destruction thereby; how much more hath the free grace of God, and the gift [which is granted] by that grace, as manifested and displayed in that one greater and better man Jesus Christ, abounded to many, that is, to all the numerous family of believers.

16 And this in two very important respects. In the first place, the gift [is] not merely, as the ruin that came upon us by one that sinned, in respect to the number of offences in question; for the sentence of but one [offence passed] upon us to condemnation; and we were no farther affected by the subsequent sins of Adam, than by those of any intermediate parent: but the gift of Divine grace, exhibited in the gospel, [is effectual] to our justification from the guilt of many offences. It not only delivers us from the sentence to which we were from our birth liable on account of Adam's sin, but from that more grievous and dreadful sentence which we had brought upon ourselves in adult life by our innumerable and aggravated personal transgressions. Moreover there is another important article in which the grace of the gospel exceeds the seeming severity, which attended the imputation of guilt from our first father Adam; namely, that if by one transgression; who is the figure of him that was to come:

15 But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead; much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many.

16 And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift: for the judgement was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offences unto justification.

17 For if by one man's offence death reigned by one, much more they which receive abundance of grace, and of the gift of

*Figur, or model.* That the word τυπος has this signification, will appear from Acts vii. 44; Rom. vi. 17; Phil. iii. 17; 1 Thess. i. 7; 2 Thess. iii. 9; 1 Tim. iv. 12; Tit. ii. 7; Heb viii. 5; 1 Pet. v. 3.

*Of him who was to come.* τω μετα-αδων. Here is evidently an elipsis. Most commentators have explained it as referring to the great person that was to come; or in other words, the figure [Adam] that is, Christ. But Sir Norton Knatchbull would explain it of mankind to come. He thinks that Adam cannot with any propriety be called a type of Christ, as the type of a thing is its shape, model, or representation; and therefore if the thing be good, the type of it must be so too. Dr. Milner, in vindication of this interpretation, observes, that this will best agree with the apostle's design. For if Adam was to be considered as a public person, the type, figure, or representation of mankind, his conduct will, as the apostle says it does, affect infants. Dr. Milner's *Fading Flowers of Life*, p. 14.—But it may be sufficient to answer, that upon the common interpretation, there was plainly a correspondence between Christ and Adam, as each was a public head, though the influence of each on his respective seed was different; so that the whole reasoning of both these learned and ingenious writers seems inconclusive.

*Thank*


Yet believers in Christ shall be justified from many offences.

of righteousness, shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.

one man's offence death reigned by one over all his posterity, as we observed above, they who thankfully and obediently receive the overflowing abundance of free grace, and of the munificent gift of righteousness exhibited in the gospel, shall much more reign in life by the one great Restorer and Recoverer of his seed, even Jesus Christ: that is, believers shall by him be brought to a much nobler and more excellent life than that from which Adam fell, and which they lost in him.

Therefore, on the whole, you see as I began to observe to you before, that as [the consequence] of one offence, on the one hand, [extended] to all men, to bring condemnation upon them, so also, on the other side, [the consequence] of one grand act of righteousness [extended] to all men who receive and embrace it; securing to them that justification which will be crowned with the enjoyment of eternal life. For as by the dis-obedience of one man many were constituted sinners, that is, became obnoxious to death, as if they themselves had sinned: so by the complete and persevering obedience of one man shall be constituted righteous, that they shall be treated as such in the day of God's final account; though they have no perfect righteousness of their own to plead, in consequence of which they should stand before God, and claim the reward.

But

a Thankfully and obediently receive.] It is so very plain, that the abundant reign in life by Jesus Christ, is appropriated to persons of a particular character, expressed here by receiving the gift, that it is surprising any should have spoken of it as common to the whole human race. And nothing is more evident, than that the word r^p&^z has often this sense, and signifies being active in embracing a benefit proposed, or a person offering himself under a character of importance. Comp. John i 11, 12; chap. iii. 11, 2. chap. v. 43; chap. xii. 43; chap. xiii. 20; Jam. v. 10; 1 John v. 9; 2 John 10; 3 John 7.

b As I began to observe, &c. This 18th verse seems connected with the end of the 12th; and all the intermediate verses do undoubtedly come in as a parenthesis; and the reader, by perusing the interwoven text alone, will observe, that these verses, viz. 12th, 18th, 10th, make one continued sentence. But I judged it necessary here, and elsewhere, to break the paraphrase into several sentences, lest the excessive length should have rendered the sense obscure, and the passage unwieldy and disagreeable. Many of Paul's sentences are, as they stand in the text, obscured by the length. Compare 2 Cor. xii. 14; chap. xiii.

k Many shall be constituted righteous.] To become liable to death for the offence of another, is indeed being thereby constituted a sinner, or treated as a sinner: since death is, in its primary view, to be considered as the wages of sin, or the animadversion of a righteous God upon it; but simply to be raised from the dead is not being made righteous, or treated as a righteous person; since it is a very impossible case, and will in fact be the case of millions, that a sinner may be raised in order to more condescend and dreadful punishment. The whole interpretation therefore, which Mr. Taylor has given of this text, in this view, appears to me destitute of a sufficient foundation.

v. Made
Reflections on Adam's sin.

But as for the law of Moses, that could not possibly procure this great benefit to them; for that made a little entrance⁴, that is, took place among comparatively a very small number of mankind for a few ages, that the offence might, instead of being removed, abound much more than before; as in consequence of it many things became offensive to God, which were before indifferent, and the guilt of moral offences was aggravated by so express a declaration of the rule of duty, violated by them; so that on the whole, it seemed intended to convince and humble, rather than to justify. Yet, on the whole, God hath taken an occasion to glorify the riches of his mercy by that dispensation, and where sin has abounded under the most aggravating circumstances, grace hath super-abounded, so as thereby to gain a superior and more illustrious triumph. That as sin hath reigned in the wide and universal devastation which death had made on those whom it had brought under that fatal sentence, so grace might reign to such a degree, as to bestow eternal life and happiness, through the glorious and complete righteousness in which we obtain by Jesus Christ our Lord, when we sincerely believe in him as our Saviour, and give up our souls to the authority of his equitable and auspicious government.

IMPROVEMENT.

Let us daily remember our relation to God by Christ Jesus and glory in this relation: saying frequently, “He is indeed our Father. This God, with his adorable, unfathomable, immutable perfections, is our God. He will be our Guide unto death, and our portion for ever. My soul shall make her boast in the Lord. What relation can be so honourable, what can afford such an unfailing spring of perpetual joy!”

Let us honour him in all his dispensations; even those which may appear the most mysterious. In this number we are undoubtedly to reckon his constituting Adam the covenant-head of his

1 Made a little entrance.] So ἐξαρχής properly signifies, and is well rendered by the Vulgate, subinterveniit; in which sense ἐξαρχής is used, Gal. ii. 4. Thus the partial and limited entrance of the law is distinguished from that universal entrance of sin, which passed on all, as

Mr. Locke well observes. This I think preferable to Mr. L'Enfant’s rendering it, the law intervened; that is, between Adam and Christ.

20 Moreover, the law entered, that the offence might abound: but where sin abounded, grace did much more abound:

21 That as sin hath reigned unto death; even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord.

"A What
his posterity, and involving our life or death in him; yea, adjusting the relation so, that our spiritual state should be greatly affected by his conduct, and we should by his transgression become the heirs, not only of death, but of moral pollution, and ultimately by virtue of our descent from him be shapen in iniquity and conceived in sin.

It is a consideration which must carry awe and solemnity, grief and lamentation, throughout all ages, that by one man sin entered into the world, and death made such a progress by the entrance of sin, as to pass upon all men in consequence of that act. O God, how terrible are thy judgments! and yet how rich thy compassion in appointing the second Adam to repair the ruin and desolations of the first! Yea, more than to repair them; to deliver us from all our most aggravated transgressions, if we believe in him, and receive the gift of righteousness! to cause us to reign in life by him! to bring us to a more exalted and secure happiness than Adam himself enjoyed in the day in which he was created, or than Eden, the garden of God, could afford!

Let us adore these super-aboundings of Divine grace, and its reign unto eternal life. And let our knowledge of the law of God, our distress under a sense of having broken it, and being thereby exposed to its condemning sentence, be considered as illustrating the riches of that grace whereby we are saved, and so animate us to returns of the humblest gratitude, and a persevering obedience. Amen.

SECT. XII.

The Apostle shews, that the gospel, far from dissolving our obligations to practical holiness, does strongly increase them; which is a consideration tending highly to recommend it to the esteem and acceptance of all. Rom. VI. 1—14.

Romans VI. 1.

What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?

Romans VI. 1.

Thus we have asserted the doctrine of justification by faith, or in other words of salvation by grace. And now let us consider how it is to be improved. What shall we say then, concerning the practical inferences to be drawn from it? Shall we say, Let us continue in the habitual practice of sin that grace may abound so

* What shall we say then, &c.] The Apostle here sets himself more fully to clear and vindicate the doctrine he taught, from the consequence suggested before.

chap. iii. 7, 8. He had then only in strong terms denied, and renounced it, but here removes the very foundation of it.

b Dead.
His grace leads us to walk in newness of life.

5) much the more, in pardoning and saving us, God forbid, that such an unworthy thought should ever arise in our hearts. We have disclaimed the consequence above, (chap. iii. 7, 8,) and we most solemnly disclaim it again. We, who are dead to sin, we, who by our profession are under such sacred engagements to mortify it with the greatest care, how shall we yet live in it? Surely it were the grossest contradiction that can be imagined. On the contrary, it is apparent, that nothing has so great a tendency to animate us to avoid sin, and to enable us to conquer it, as this doctrine of gospel-grace.

3 What, Sirs, know ye not, and is it possible, that any of you should be ignorant of this great and obvious truth, that as many of us as have been baptized into Jesus Christ, that is, into the profession of the Christian faith; which is the case of us all; have been baptized into his death, and engaged to conform to the great purposes of it; which we know were to abolish sin?

4 (1 Pet. iv. 1, 2; 1 John iii. 5.) Therefore, as this is the known obligation of this solemn initiatory ordinance, it may be said, that we are buried with him in that baptism, which we received as bringing us into a kind of fellowship in his death; most evidently for this purpose, that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, and the operation of his illustrious, though mysterious power; so we also should continue, during the remainder of our days, to walk in newness of life; maintaining a course of conduct and actions entirely different from the former. For surely these two must go together; and we may conclude, that if we are thus made to grow together in the likeness of his death,

b Dead to sin.] Elsner shews how frequently moral writers among the heathens speak of wise and good men as dead to sensuality and animal pleasures. Elsner, Observ. Vol. ii. p. 28.

c Baptized into Jesus Christ.] As the church at Rome seems to have been planted about the year 43, and this epistle was written in the year 58, that is, 15 years after, and yet the apostle speaks of the converted Romans in general as baptized, it must be supposed, as Dr. Gale well argues, that baptism was administered to those whose parents had been Christians at the time of their birth. Compare Col. ii. 12. See Gale's Sermon, Vol. ii. p. 202, 203.

d Buried with him in baptism.] It seems the part of candour to confess, that here is an illusion to the manner of baptizing by immersion, as most usual in these early times; but that will not prove this particular circumstance to be essential to the ordinance; and, in whatever manner it was administered, if it were intended as a declaration of faith in the death and resurrection of Christ, as it is well known, Christ died for sin, it would infer an obligation to die to it, and rise again to a holy life, which is the main point the apostle labours.

3 Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into his death?

4 Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

5 For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death,
For the old man is crucified with Christ.

6 Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.

7 For he that is dead is freed from sin.

8 Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him;

Made to grow together.] Dr. Wells observes, that this is the most exact import of συμπληρωμα, and that it doth not signify merely being planted together. As there is something harsh in the construction of it and ἀλλα here, Beza would for ἀλλα read ἀπο, but Kaphelius, in his notes from Herodotus has produced many parallel constructions in which ἀλλα signifies, so. As for the future συμπληρωμα, he shews that it signifies a necessary consequence from the premises.

Enervated, deposed, and destroyed; ὀλοκληρωμενος. We render it destroyed, not only tormentted or enfeebled, but utterly slain; and the same word is rendered 2 Thess. ii. 13; and 1 Cor. xv. 26; perhaps not with exact propriety, Heb. ii. 14. The utter destruction of the body of sin in us is certainly intended in the gospel, but the particular import of this word is to make void, debilitate, enervate, disannul, abolish or depose. Compare Rom. iii. 51; chap. iv. 14; 1 Cor. ii. 6; chap. xiii. 8; chap. xv. 24; Eph. ii. 15. 2 Tim. i. 10. I have joined the significations in the paraphrase, and given the version, which appears to me the most exactly to answer the import of the original. The body of sin in believers is indeed an enfeebled, conquered, and deposed tyrant, and the stroke of death finishes its destruction.

Set at liberty.] ξαποκειμενος signifies to be justified or vindicated; and here it seems to import being delivered from future claims of subjection. But this sense is so uncommon, that I am much in doubt whether it might not be rendered justified here, to intimate that a sense of justification by the cross of Christ is the great means of our delivery from the bondage of sin, as it animates and excites us to shake off its yoke.
and glory of the heavenly world; and you will easily understand, and I hope, easily feel the obligation, which that hope lays upon us, not only to cease from sin, but through his grace to cultivate universal holiness. We should ever be under the influence of these views, even to the very end of our course, as we know that Christ being raised from the dead, dies no more; death no more reigneth over him, as it seemed for a while to do. And thus your immortal life and happiness, if you pursue it according to his direction and intention, is secure. For whereas he died, he died once for all, as a sacrifice for sin, to atone the injured justice of God, and repair the honours of his violated law. And as he liveth, he liveth to God for ever; his immortal life is entirely appropriated and devoted to his service, wherein we ought to make it our constant care to imitate its example. Suffer therefore the word of exhortation grounded on this important principle, and so also reckon yourselves to be once for all dead unto sin, never to return under its power any more; and being thus made alive, let it be your care, in imitation of your Divine Master, to devote your recovered life to the honour and service of God in Christ Jesus our Lord, whose pattern and authority, in such a relation, concur to demand it of us. Therefore let not sin reign as an uncontrollable sovereign, now you have another Lord, so much greater and better; let not the irregular inclinations of your minds, when they may move in your mortal bodies, give law to them. The early conquest of sin over the human nature hath, alas, reduced them to the sad state of mortality: but do not go on, after such a deliverance hath been wrought out for you, in a servile and wretched manner, to obey it in its licentious desires and demands:

Neither present your members to sin [as] weapons and instruments of unrighteousness; but with all devout affection and holy zeal, present yourselves to God as those who by his rich mercy and almighty power, are now made spiritually alive, and called out from that wretched state, in which you lay as among the dead. Conscious therefore of the obligations you lie under to him, who hath raised you to this new and glorious life, present all your members and powers to God as weapons and instruments of righteousness.
14 For sin shall not have dominion over you; for ye are not under the law, but under grace.

ourness; to fight his battles b; and to be for ever devoted to his service. Do it boldly and resolutely, and not as if you feared that your former master should recover his power and prove a severer tyrant, after you had thus attempted to revolt; for you may on the contrary be assured that sin shall not have any more dominion over you as you are not under the law, a dispensation of bondage and terror, but under grace, under the merciful dispensation of the gospel; which affords such consolations, and inspires such hopes, as may animate the soul to a much more successful combat with sin than the law could do, and give a much nobler assurance of a complete victory over it. Rom. viii. 1—4.

Let our hearts rise with indignation at the thoughts of so ungrateful an abuse of the Divine goodness, as to take encouragement from the aboundings of grace to continue in sin. Are not Ver. we likewise by profession dead to it? are we not bound by our baptismal vow, as the ancient christians, to whom Paul addresses himself, were? Or has the use and purpose of baptism been since altered, so as to allow a covenant with sin, an agreement with hell, even to those who are listed under the banners of a Saviour? Is Christ then become the minister of sin, or shall his death lose all its effect, while we profess to honour the solemn memorials of it. Recollecting that we are not under the law but under grace, let so glorious a dispensation animate us to resolutions proportionably 14 heroic; and may the remembrance of the death of the Son of God in concurrence with that of his resurrection, engage us to walk in newness of life, if we desire another day to be planted into the likeness of that resurrection, and to rise victorious and triumphant 3 from the grave.

No more let us return under the power of that spiritual death, from which Christ, at the price of his own life, hath delivered 10, 13 us; but let us live to God; solemnly presenting our bodies and our souls to him, to be honoured as the instruments of his service, and employing each of our members, according to its proper office,

b Instruments to fight his battles.] The word ενα properly signifies weapons, and in this sense it has a beautiful propriety.

Under the law.] The Mosaic law may be particularly intended; and the propriety of what is here said, when considered in reference to that, is illustrated by that excellent discourse of the apostle in the viith chapter; but it may very well imply that we are not so under any law, as to be utterly condemned for want of a legal, that is, a perfect righteousness; an apprehension of which would tend utterly to discourage the soul, in all its attempts to free itself for the future from the dominion of sin.
Christians are not the servants of sin;

sect. xii.

I HAVE just been reminding you Christians of your great privileges; that you are now under a dispensation of the most glorious grace in the gospel and not under the restraints, nor under the terrors of the Mosaic law. And what then are we to infer? Shall we take encouragement from thence to offend him to whose distinguishing goodness we are so much obliged, and sin securely and presumptuously, because we are not under the law, but under the grace of the gospel? God forbid! The inference would be so odious, and so dangerous, that though I disclaimed it before, (ver. 1.) I cannot too frequently guard you against it. And should you allow yourselves to argue thus, it would sufficiently prove that you do not belong to Christ; however you may glory in a pretended external relation. Know ye not, that to whomsoever ye present yourselves [as] servants actually to obey his commands, his servants you are? Not his whose name ye may bear without practically acknowledging his authority, but his whom you in fact obey. Least of all can you divide yourselves between two contrary masters, but must either be entirely the servants of sin, which you know by a certain consequence leads to eternal death, or entirely the servants of God by a course of resolute and persevering obedience which, notwithstanding your former failures, will securely lead to righteousness and life.

sect. xiii.

The apostle takes this opportunity of urging on the Christians at Rome, that holiness to which they were so strongly obliged by the gospel. Rom. VI. 15, to the end.

Romans VI. 15.

What then? Shall we sin, because we are not under the law but under grace? God forbid.

16 Know ye not that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?

17 But thanks be to God, that whereas you were, once the servants of sin, this is to be spoken of as a bondage past and gone; that ye have now
But, being free from sin, are the servants of righteousness.

from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you.

18 Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.

19 I speak after the manner of men, because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity, unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness, unto holiness.

20 For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness.

21 What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed?

1 Model of righteousness, &c. [Eusebius] That πατήρ may properly be rendered model, see note 1 on Rom. v. 14, and add to the instances there given Elsener's note on this place; and see Dr. Sæcker of Christianity, p. 178.—Mr. Locke thinks it is an elegant metaphor, to represent the delivery of a servant over from one master to another, and that the gospel, expressed by the form of sound words, is the master succeeding to the law. But it seems more probable, that it may allude to melted metal being formed by the mold into which it is poured; and it finely expresses that piety of temper with respect to the gospel, which constitutes so lovely a part of the true Christian's character.

b As ye have.] It is in the original ἐστιν ἔργον; but ἔργον is here most evidently an expletive, as in Greek it often is. It is of some moment to observe this; and I think it had been better, if our translators had more frequently attended to it.
you then derive from those things, of the very remembrance of which you are now heartily ashamed; which you would not be, if you had indeed obtained any solid advantage by them; whereas this is far from being the case, for the certain end of those things is death. But remember, you have now what is most honourable and most advantageous in your view; for being set free from sin, and engaged to God as his servants and property you have your fruit unto holiness, in which you find a present and most solid advantage; and the end you have in view is nothing less than eternal life: such is the infinite difference, and so advantageous the exchange you have made. For eternal death is the proper wages and desert of sin, and is all the gain which its wretched slave will have to shew from the hand of his tyrannical master in the great day of future account: but eternal life, not as in the former instance, the justly deserved retribution of the action, but the gift of a gracious and bountiful God in Christ Jesus our Lord, to whom we are to ascribe it, that any of our services are accepted, and much more that they are recompensed with a munificence worthy the Lord of all.

IMPROVEMENT.

Being set at liberty from the condemning sentence of God's law, let us charge our souls, by all the ties of gratitude, that we do not turn his grace into wantonness; or deceive ourselves with vain words in a matter of infinite importance. We cannot be at the same time the servants of God and the servants of sin; and certainly our understandings must be darkened to infatuation, if we can long doubt whose service we should prefer. The work of righteousness, is peace, the effect of it quietness and assurance for ever, (Isa. xxxii. 17;) but death is the wages of sin, and it shall be repaid to all that go on in it. And O what, and how terrible a death! to be cast into the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone.

Eternal death—in the great day of future account.] I see no imaginable reason to believe, as some late writers have intimated in their paraphrase on this verse, that death here signifies being cast out of existence. See chap. ii. 12. note i. If this could be inferred with relation to wicked heathens from the places before us, it might also, contrary to the opinion of these authors, be concluded to be the case of wicked Christians from chap. vii. 13. The truth is, that to die signifies to fall under the capital sentence of the Divine law; and it is well known, that being cast into the ever-burning lake is in this view called death, Rev. xxi. 8.
And the fruits of righteousness.

brimstone, which is the second death. How merciful are all the repeated admonitions which warn us to flee from it! Let us all judge, that it is already too long that we have yielded ourselves the servants of sin: too long that our members, made for the service of their Creator, devoted perhaps with great solemnity to our Redeemer, have been abused and prostituted as the instruments of unrighteousness. Surely it is too much time that we have already spent, too much vigour that we have already exerted in so base a servitude. For the future let us act as those who are made free from sin:

And to animate us to it, let us often reflect how unfruitful the works of darkness have been found; in what shame they have already ended; in what shame and everlasting contempt they must end, if they be finally pursued. And let us daily direct our eye to that everlasting life, that crowns the happy prospect of those who have their fruit unto holiness. Blessed effect of serving God now, to serve and enjoy him for ever! to enjoy, through eternal ages, the pleasures of a nature thoroughly sanctified, and the sight and favour of that God, who is the original source and pattern of sanctification! It is the glorious mark at which we are aiming. Let us pursue it steadily and resolutely; yet always remembering that it is the gift of God, and never presuming to think of so glorious a remuneration as the wages of any duty we can perform. Alas! the imperfections of our best services daily forfeit the blessings of time: how impossible then is it, that the sincerity of them, amidst so many frailties and defects, should purchase the glories of eternity!

SECT. XIV.

The Apostle enters upon his design of taking off the believing Jews from their fond attachment to the Mosaic law, now they were, in a spiritual sense, married to Christ by the gospel. Rom. VII. 1—6.

ROMANS VII. I.

I HAVE been endeavouring to direct your regards to the gospel, and to Christ as there exhibited, in order to your justification and salvation. Now you may perhaps be ready to object, that you, who are Jews, will certainly be out of the way of obtaining those privileges, if you should neglect the Mosaic law, the Divine authority of which none can reasonably question. But know ye not, brethren, (for I am now speak...
The law hath dominion, as long as it liveth.

speaking to those that are supposed to be familiarly acquainted with the contents of that law for which they are so zealous;) that, on the principles which the law itself lays down, it ruleth over a man only so long as it liveth; its dominion over particular persons can, at the utmost, last no longer than till it is itself abrogated; for that is as it were its death, since the Divine authority going along with it was the very life and soul of the law. Suppose that to cease, and the letter of the precept is but a dead corpse, and with respect to its obligation as it had never been. Just as it is, according to the law itself, with respect to the power of an husband over his wife, which death entirely dissolves: for the married woman is indeed bound and confined by the law to her husband while he is alive; but if [her] husband be dead, she is set at liberty from any farther subjection to the law of [her] husband, that is, from that law which had given him a peculiar property in her, and authority over her. Therefore if she become the property of another man, whilst her husband liveth, she carries the infamous name of an adulteress; but if her husband be dead, she is set at liberty from the obligation of the law that bound her to him, so as to be no more subject to the shame and punishment of an adulteress; though she become the property of another man: for death having interposed between them, hath dissolved the former relation; he is dead to her, and she to him. Thus ye also, my dear brethren, are in effect dead to the Mosaic law by the body of Christ; his death and sufferings having

2 For the woman which hath an husband, is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband.

3 So then, if while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress; but if her husband be dead she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man.

4 Wherefore, my brethren, are in effect dead to the law of

a So long as it liveth: to serv xServ [v.]
It would be contrary to the apostle's design, to suppose the sense of this to be, as our translation renders it, as long as he, that is, the man in question liveth: for he professedly endeavours to prove, that they had out-lived their obligations to the law. Elisher would connect everlasting with xServ, and render it, the law and authority of the husband continues in force, as long as he, that is, the husband liveth, and produces authorities to prove that xServ is often applied to the oblige force of a law, or that matrimonial customs are sometimes called xServ. (Observe. Vol. II. p. 31.) But this, if it avoid as he pleads, one tautology, certainly occasions another, for the 3d verse plainly expresses this sense; and it would require a transposition not to be allowed without more apparent reason. Our rendering is more natural, and suits the connection with the following verses, in which the law is represented as the first husband, whose decease leaves them free to be married to Christ.

b If she become the property of another, (as serv xServ xServ,) while her husband liveth, &c. The apostle here speaks in the general, not entering exactly into every excepted case that might be imagined; to infer therefore, contrary to our Lord's express decision elsewhere, that adultery is not a sufficient foundation for divorce, seems very unreasonable; though Bishop Burnet assures us that great stress was once laid on the argument. Burn. Hist. of the Reformation. Vol. II. p. 57.

c By the body of Christ. He is to be con.
law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God.

5 For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death:

6 But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter.

But we are set at liberty from the law. having now accomplished its design, and abrogated its authority: and this, with a gracious intent, that ye might be, as it were, married to another, [that is,] to him who was in so glorious and triumphant a manner raised from the dead, no more to die; that in consequence of this new marriage, we might bring forth fruit unto God in all the ways of holy obedience.

And ye should do it with the greatest zeal; for when we were in the flesh, that is, under the comparatively carnal dispensation of Moses, a variety of sinful passions, accidentally occasioned and irritated by the law, were active in our members, so as to produce visible sinful actions, and in them to bring forth a very different fruit from that which I have just been mentioning; even as I observed before, (chap. vi. 21, 23,) such fruit as would expose you to eternal death, if God were to be strict to mark your offences, and if his mercy did not interpose to break the fatal connection: a circumstance which it is of the utmost importance seriously to reflect upon.

But now we are set at liberty from our obligation to the law, that obligation in which we were held, being in effect dead, or abrogated (as I told you above, ver. 1—4,) so as that now you are, in a more liberal manner, and from nobler principles, to serve God as your Master and Father in Christ, in the newness of the Spirit, and not [in] the oldness of the letter: that is, you are to live as those that are renewed by the Holy Spirit of God, in a rich abundance poured out upon you under this new and better dispensation, whereby you are brought to observe the spiritual meaning and design of the law; being no longer bound by these literal and ceremonial precepts which were indeed obligatory long since, but now begin to be antiquated and out of date. (Heb. viii. 13.)

IMPROVE-

considered here as testifying by the authority of a Christian apostle, that this was the design of Christ's death; so that all he does in his argument here, is to shew, that allowing it to have been thus, (as Jewish believers all died,) their freedom from the Mosaic law followed on the very principles of that law itself.

d Newness of the Spirit, not [in] the oldness of the letter: This is the literal version; but 'new spirit, and old letter, are tantamount expressions, and are more agreeable to the turn of our language.'
God hath conferred upon all Christians this singular honour, that the whole body of them should be represented as espoused to Christ. Let us always remember, how we are engaged by that sacred relation, to bring forth fruit unto God. And may the remembrance of the resurrection of Christ put continual vigour into our obedience, while we regard him as the ever-living Lord, to whom our obligations are indissoluble and everlasting.

5 Too much have sinful passions reigned in our flesh, during our unconverted state. In too many instances have they wrought effectually to bring forth fruit unto death. And we owe it to the wonderful mercy and forbearance of God, that death, eternal death, hath not long since been the consequence.

6 Being freed from the yoke of the ceremonial law, being freed also from the condemning sentence of that moral law, under the obligations of which by the constitution of our intelligent and rational nature we are all born; let us thankfully acknowledge the favour, and charge it upon our grateful hearts, that we serve God in newness of spirit and of life. To engage us to this, may we experience more abundantly the renewings of the Holy Ghost; and the actions of our lives will be easily and delightfully reduced to the obedience of these precepts which his omnipotent and gracious hand hath inscribed on our hearts!

Sect. XV.

To wean the believing Jews from their undue attachment to the law of Moses, the apostle represents at large, how comparatively ineffectual its motives were, to produce that holiness, which, by a lively faith in the gospel, we may so happily obtain. Rom. VII. 7, to the end. VIII. 1—4.

Romans VII. 7.

I have been observing above, to those of my Christian brethren who were educated in the Jewish religion, that irregular passions, while we were under the law of Moses, and were acquainted with no superior dispensation, did in some instances, by means of the law, operate so as to bring forth fruit unto death. And it is necessary, that I should not only farther illustrate that important remark, but expressly caution against any mistake with relation to it. What shall we say then, or what do we intend by that
By the law of Moses is the knowledge of sin.

**sin.** God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet.

8 But sin taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without that assertion? [that] the law itself [is] sin, that there is any moral evil in it, or that it is intended by God, or adapted in its own nature, to lead men into sin; *God forbid!* We revere the high authority by which it was given, too humbly, to insinuate anything of that kind. And indeed there are many particulars in which I should not have known sin, but by the law. I should not, in a mere state of nature, have apprehended the evil of them; which I now learn from finding them so expressly prohibited. *I had not for instance known the sinfulness of lust, or irregular desires, unless the law had said,* "Thou shalt not covet," from whence it was easy to infer, that this law takes cognizance of the heart as well of external actions. **But** as soon as I had understanding enough to perceive that the law forbade the indulgence of irregular desires, I found that I had in fact broken it; and thereby incurred the penalty, without any hope of help and deliverance from the law. And this, while I looked no farther, naturally tended to throw my mind into a state of dejection and despair. So that I may say, that sin taking occasion from the awful sanction of the commandment, the wrath and ruin which it denounced, brought me into so sad a situation of mind,

* I should not have known sin, &c.] The apostle here, by a very dexterous turn, changes the person, and speaks as of himself. This he elsewhere does, (Rom. iii. 6; 1 Cor. x. 50, chap. iv. 6,) when he is only personating another character. And the character assumed here is that of a man, first ignorant of the law, then under it, and sincerely desiring to please God, but finding to his sorrow, the weakness of the motives it suggested, and the sad discouragement under which it left him; and last of all, with transport discovering the gospel, and gaining pardon and strength, peace and joy by it. But to suppose he speaks all these things of himself, as the confirmed Christian, that he really was, when he wrote this epistle, is not only foreign, but contrary to the whole scope of his discourse, as well as what is expressly asserted, chap. viii. 2.

b Thou shalt not covet.] This, by the way, proves, that Paul thought the covetousness forbidden in the tenth commandment related to the heart, and not merely, as some have represented it, to any overt act, to an attempt to take away what belongs to another. And this might be a hint to all thinking men, that the secret powers of their souls were under a Divine inspection, and that much guilt might be contracted which did not appear to any human eye.

* Sin taking occasion from the commandment.] Most commentators have explained this, as signifying, that sin was quickened by the prohibition; the inclination of human nature in general, being like that of a froward child, who will do a thing because it was forbidden, and perhaps is, as it were, reminded of an evil, on hearing it mentioned in a prohibition. But, not to examine how far this is a universal case, it must surely be acknowledged, that all lust does not arise from hence, much being previous to any possible knowledge of God's law, whether revealed or natural. I therefore incline to the interpretation which Mr. Dunlop has given, in his excellent sermon on this passage, the tenor of whose thoughts, I have followed in the whole of my paraphrase upon it, begging leave to refer my reader to his discourse, for the reasons that have determined me to it. Compare Jer. ii. 25. See *Dunlop's,* Sermon. Vol. II. p. 46, 47.
The commandment found to be unto death:

9 For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died.

10 And the commandment which was ordained to life I found to be unto death.

11 For sin taking occasion by the commandment, and representing the great Law-giver for, not to examine how far this description would suit them then, we must on that principle of interpretation suppose, they are all represented in the close of the chapter, as believing in Christ; which alas! we know to have been very far from being their case.

d Wrought for me.] The word ἔργασεν in many places signifies to operate in a powerful and efficacious manner, (compare 2 Cor. iv. 17; chap. v. 5; chap. vii. 11; chap. xii. 12,) and may well here signify a strong irritation of what might, without it, have been in some degree natural.

v I was once alive without the law.] The apostle cannot, as Mr. Locke supposes here, speak in the person of the whole Jewish people, and in this clause refer to the time between Abraham and Moses; but, in his own person, and as representing the first man, to the time when Adam was alive without the law. He here seems to refer to the period between this event in the history of the people of God, and the time when the law was given to Israel; and hence he is so industrious to distinguish between the law and the commandment, and between the law and the matter of the commandment; and this he does, in the following verses, by repeatedly using the word commandment, where the word law might be expected. As our Lord did afterwards, when he sent the apostles, and at their departure, in his farewell address, said, 'Go ye, then, into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature; he which believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he which believeth not shall be damned' (Matt. xxviii. 19, 20); so here the apostle shows that the commandment, which he is evidently speaking of, was not the law, but a commandment, which he describes as a commandment which was intended for life; and he observes, as the consequence of its being thus intended for life, that it was ordained to life; and that it was found to be unto death.
For though the law is holy and spiritual,

8 So that it appeared; 
immandment, deceived me, and by it slew me.

giver as now become my irreconcilable enemy, deceived me into a persuasion that I could be no worse than I was, and thereby it slew me; it multiplied my mortal wounds, and rendered my case still more desperate.

So that you see, upon the whole, the law in the general [is] acknowledged to be holy, and the particular commandment in question is acknowledged to be agreeable to the holy nature of God, just in reference to the reason of things, and on the whole, in its consequences good, and subservient to men’s happiness, if they continue in a state of rectitude. Was then that which was good in itself made death to me? Shall I charge my ruin on this holy and good law of God? By no means. God forbid I should ever utter any thing like that. But I must rather charge it upon sin, which by means of so holy an instrument undid me. I say it again, Sin was made death to me, so that it appeared to be sin indeed (that odious dreadful thing, of which nothing can be said worse than that it is itself, as working death in me, by the occasion of which is so eminently good: that so sin might by the commandment thus perverted, appear exceeding sinful, and stand forth in all its native and detestable colours; capable of turning the law itself into a means of producing the guilt it so solemnly forbade, and the ruin it was intended to prevent.

It is on this therefore that I lay all the blame; for we well know that the law is spiritual, and as it extends to the Spirit, was intended to purify and exalt it, and to assert its superiority over the meaner part of our nature. But, alas, may the man I have been describing and representing above, be ready to say, I am in a great measure carnal, and in so many instances subdued by the remaining infirmities of my nature, that I am ready passionately to cry out, I am even sold under sin; which often rises with an almost
almost irresistible strength, to assume a tyrannical dominion over me, as if I were its slave and property. For that which I actually do, I allow, or approve not; in many instances; for too often, through the strength of passion and surprise of temptation, I practise not that which in the general tenor of my mind, I habitually will; but the things which I even hate, which I think of with the greatest abhorrence, those things in many respects I am so unhappy to do; which indeed makes me a burden to myself.

Now if I do that which I would not, in willing not to do it, I do so far, though to my own condensation, consent to the law, and bear my testimony to it, that it is good, and do indeed desire to fulfil it; though when a pressing hour of temptation comes, contrary to my resolution, I fail in observing it. But now, in these circumstances, it is no more I myself that can properly be said to do it; but rather sin, which dwelleth in me, and which makes, as it were, another person, having desires and motions and interests entirely contrary to those of the renewed part within; which I would call my better self. For I well know, that in me, that is, in my flesh, the corrupt and degenerate self, nothing that is good dwelleth. I find my animal powers sadly debased and enslaved: for to will is indeed present with me, I form many good purposes and resolutions; but when the time comes in which I should bring them into effect, I find not in my heart a sufficient ability strenuously to perform that which I know is good, and which I acknowledge to be most amiable and desirable.

It is indeed so grievous a reflection to me that I cannot forbear repeating it again and again; for it is really so, that I do not the good that I often will, and resolve to do; but the evil which I will not to do, which I form the strongest purposes against, that I do in repeated instances.

a good man's character. And the many instances in which very excellent persons in the distress of their hearts for the remainder of imperfection in their character, adopt this very phrase, plainly shew with what propriety Paul might put it into the mouth of one whom he did not consider as an abandoned sinner, and destitute of every principle of real piety.

If the meaning of such expressions as these were, that upon the whole, the person using them went on in a prevailing course of habitual wickedness, against the convictions and dictates of his own conscience one would imagine Paul would have re bucked such a one with great severity, and
The cause of which is in-dwelling sin.

20 Now if I do that which I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.

21 I find then a law, that when I would do good, evil is present with me. For with regard to the inner-man, that is, my mind, the better and nobler powers of my intellectual nature, I delight in the law of God; I most heartily approve it, and look upon its whole system with complacency, as what I could rejoice to be conformed to in the completest manner, and highest degree. But, alas, I see another, and quite opposite law, of vicious and irregular inclinations, seated in my members which taking its rise from a lower and meaner principle, is continually making war against the better law of my mind, and too frequently captivating me to the law of sin, which is, as I said, seated in my corporeal members. Wretched man that I am! Do I often cry out in such a circumstance, with no better supports and incitements than the law can give; who shall rescue me, miserable captive as I am, from the body of this death? From this continual burden which I carry about with me, and which is cumbersome and odious, as a dead carcase, tied to a living body, to be dragged along with it wherever it goes.

and answered these vain and hypocritical pleas; whereas he represents this person afterwards, as with joy embracing the gospel, and so obtaining superior strength upon the full manifestation of pardoning grace there.

1 Sin that dwelleth, &c.] This seems indeed no more than a repetition of verse 17; but it is a graceful and expressive repetition, and shows how near the affair lay to the heart of the person thus complaining, and in what sad and frequent successions the complaint was renewed. The beautiful passage in the 6th book of Xenophon’s Cyropedia, (p. 323, edit. Hutchin. 1751, 8vo.) where Arasbus complains of two souls contending within him, (a passage which it is very possible St. Paul might have read,) contains an agreeable illustration of this paragraph.

m I delight in the law of God, after the inner-man.] This is so sure a trace of real piety, and is represented in scripture as, in this view, so decisive; that if it be supposed a true representation of the character, we must surely allow it to have been that of a truly good man; whatever lamented imperfections might attend it: Plato uses the phrase ὣραν to ἐγγυστίζειν, for the rational part of our nature.

n Dead carcase, &c.] It is well known, that some ancient writers mention this as
The happiness of being freed from this law of sin.

Thus I bemoan myself, when I think only of the Mosaic law, the discoveries it makes, the motives it suggests, and the circumstances in which it leaves the offender: but in the midst of this gloomy prospect, a sight of the gospel revives my heart; and I cry out as in a kind of rapture, as soon as I turn mine eyes to it, I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord, in whom he now reveals himself to me, and by whom he delivereth me from this bondage and misery. So then, whereas I myself, with the nobler powers of my spirit serve the law of God, though in too many instances I am so oppressed with the infirmity of my flesh, that I am subdued by the law of sin: [There is] now under the gospel-dispensation, no condemnation to those in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit, that is, to those, who making a profession of the Christian faith, do in the main course of their lives verify that profession; governing themselves by spiritual views, and maxims, and not by carnal appetites and interests. I say it again, I thank God for this dispensation with all the powers of my soul; though, when considering myself as only under the law, I made such melancholy complaints, the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, that glorious gospel which is attended with an abundant effusion of the vivifying and animating Spirit, has now recovered me, mortally wounded, as I seemed to have been, and set me at liberty from that lamented captivity to the law of sin and death. For God hath now, by a gracious and

as a cruelty practised by some tyrants on miserable captives who fell into their hands; and a more forcible and expressive image of the sad case represented, cannot surely enter into the mind of man.

See Rom. vii. 25. I thank God through Jesus Christ.] For υς χριστος την θυμια, some copies read η χριστος την θυμια, the grace of God, which to be sure makes a noble sense; but that of the received, and much more authentic copies comes very near it, and in the main coincides with it.

Whereas I serve, &c.—there is now no condemnation, &c.] I think there is not in the whole New Testament a more unhappy division between two chapters than what has been made here, not only in the midst of an argument, but even of the sentence. Aye, and αυτος νοον, answer so evidently to each other, that I think it plain, the former should be rendered, whereas, and then the sense appears plain and strong. I must confess this to be an uncommon use of αυτος; but if it be, as it often is an explosive, it will come to much the same.

To those in Christ Jesus, who walk, &c.] It is certain, that to be in Christ, though it sometimes imports a true and sanctifying faith, (2 Cor. v. 17.) at other times expresses only an external profession, (John xv. 2.) as the article τον is not repeated; I think it is plain the latter clause limits the former, which justifies our rendering. Compare Ps. lxixii. 1.

Hath set me at liberty, &c.] It is to be observed, that the same person who spoke before is here represented as continuing the discourse, and speaks of himself as delivered from the bondage so bitterly complained of.

What
God having sent his Son, to condemn sin in the flesh.

and most wonderful appearance [done] what it was possible for the law to do, in that it was comparatively weak through the great impiety of the flesh, against which it was possible to imagine its own principles, sufficiently provide: [he,] I say, the great Father of mercies, by sending his own well-beloved Son, in the likeness of sinful flesh, with all those innocent infirmities which the first apostacy of our nature brought upon human flesh, and by appointing him to be a sacrifice to make expiation for sin, who hath condemned sin in the flesh. Instead of being victorious, it is now brought under a sentence of death and destruction, which we, animated by those glorious motives of the gospel, are enabled to put into execution: That the righteousness of the law, in all its fundamental branches, may with greater ardor of holy zeal be fulfilled in us, who answer the engagements of our Christian profession, and, in the tenor of our lives, walk not after the flesh to indulge its desires and demands, but after the Spirit; that is, who under the influences of the Spirit of God abound in the sentiments and duties of a truly spiritual life. You see therefore, my dear brethren, by the whole series of this discourse, not only how safely you may

4 That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

5 What it was impossible for the law to do, &c.] It is indeed true in the general, as the pious Professor Zimmerman justly observes (in his excellent Comment. de Emin. Cognit. Christi, p. 6, 7, and 34,) "that the strength of the law is not adequate to that of corrupt nature; and it is by evangelical considerations, that we are most effectually animated to subdue sin." But this is to be considered as a consequence of what the apostle here asserts concerning the law of Moses, rather than the assertion itself. And indeed whoever considers the awful nature and sanctions of that law, must acknowledge, that it was calculated to be a much more efficacious restraint from sin than the unassisted light of nature, or than any other dispensation revealing God’s law, prior to the gospel. So that the above-mentioned consequence is very strong.

Merely, by its own principles, sufficiently provide.] By this clause I endeavour to lay in an effectual answer to that objection which might lie against the apostle’s argument, and our explication of it, from the eminent heights of goodness, attained by some holy men under the

law. It was not by the law, though under it, that they obtained them; but by those evangelical promises which mingled with the law, though they did not make a part of it, but sprang from the Abrahamic covenant, which, as the apostle elsewhere urges, was unrepealed by the law; and this, which the Jews were so ready to forget, (Rom. v. 3,) is the point that he so particularly labours, both in this epistle, and that to the Galatians to inculcate.

The likeness of sinful flesh.] Those writers who imagine that our first parents were, in their original state, clothed with a visible lustre, which was lost by their transgression, in reference to which it is said, that they knew they were naked, naturally explain this clause by that hypothesis.

For sin.] That word signifies a sacrifice for sin, is very apparent, from Heb. x. 6; 2 Cor. v. 21, and a vast many other passages. The reader will observe, how very easy this little transposition, on account of what is plainly a parenthesis, makes this passage, which is generally thought so obscure.
Reflections on God's sending his own Son to free us from sin.

SECTION XV.

Rom. VIII. 4.

may cease the observation of the Mosaic law, but how absolutely necessary it is, that you should look beyond that, and consequently beyond any other law, natural or revealed; as ever you expect justification before God, and desire to be animated to serve him in an acceptable manner.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. Admirable and adorable indeed were the condescensions of the blessed God, in sending his own Son in the likeness of our sinful flesh, stript of its original glories, that he might become an expiatry Sacrifice for sin. Let us remember the grand purpose for which he did it; that he might condemn sin in our flesh, that he might enable us to do execution on sin as a condemned malefactor. In his name therefore let us pursue the victory, and rejecting every overture of accommodation, with determined zeal do justice upon it. And may what we have been reading, establish our resolution of walking, not after the flesh, but after the Spirit, since we are now delivered from the curse of a broken law.

2 and blessed with a dispensation so properly called the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus: a dispensation, by attending to the peculiarities of which, we may be enabled to extend our conquests over sin in the most effectual manner, and to attain heights of virtue and pietty to which no legal considerations and motives alone could raise us.

But O, what reason of humiliation is there, that we improve it no better, and these melancholy strains should so well become us! That instead of pressing forward daily to fresh victories, and making new improvements in the Divine life, we should so often complain, and have so much cause to complain, of a law in our members, not only warring against the law of our minds, but even, in many instances, bringing us into captivity to the law of sin and death: so that we Christians should cry out, like those under the Mosaic economy, O wretched men, that we are, who shall deliver us! Let renewed views of Christ Jesus animate us to renewed vigour in this warfare; lest when we are delivered from those servile-terrors which the legal dispensation under a conscience of guilt might have awakened, sin, no longer able to take this occasion from the law, should appear yet more exceeding sinful by taking occasion, in another view, even from the gospel itself; which in many instances it seems to do.

Let us remember, that the law of God is holy, just, and good: delighting in it more and more after our inner-man, and taking heed
heed, that we do not deceive ourselves by such a passage as this, into a secret, but vain and fatal hope, that because we are convinced of our duty, and feel in our conscience a sense of the evil of sin, we might be said to serve the law of God, while by abandoning ourselves to known acts of wilful transgression, we are in our flesh serving the law of sin. Habitually to allow ourselves in neglecting the good we approve, and committing the evils we condemn, is the readiest way that hell itself can point out for the ruin of immortal souls; in such a case, all that we know, and all that we feel concerning the obligations of duty, and the excellence of holiness, aggravate, rather than extenuate our failures; and though the sublime views which eminently good men under the gospel have of religion, may sometimes incline them to adopt such complaints as these, in reference to the unallowed and lamented deficiencies and infirmities of a truly upright and pious life; it remains an eternal truth, which instead of being abrogated under the New Testament, is most expressly confirmed, that he who doeth righteousness, is righteous, and not he that merely wishes to do it; and he who committeth sin, is of the devil, even though he should speak against it like an apostle, or an angel.

It is indeed impossible, exactly to lay the line that separates the boundaries of the kingdom of Christ and of Satan; nor is it by any means a desirable thing, that we should know the lowest state of weakness and degeneracy into which a Christian may fall, while he continues in the main a Christian. We have great reason to doubt whether we be really Christians ourselves, if for our own sakes we wish to know it. Our calling obliges us to aspire after the most eminent attainments in religion; it obliges us never to rest till we find ourselves dead indeed unto sin, and alive to God through Jesus Christ: so as to abound in all the vital fruits of righteousness unto his praise and glory.

SECT. XVI.

The obligations which the gospel lays upon us to a holy life are farther argued, and especially those arising from the communication of the Spirit of God to believers. Rom. VIII. 5—17.

Romans VIII. 5.

For they that are after the flesh, do mind the things of the flesh; but after the Spirit, as ever we desire to rejoice in the glorious deliverance which the gospel brings; and with the greatest reason: for this is indeed
Indeed the most important distinction in the character of men, and not any form of outward profession, or rite of worship and devotion, they who are after the flesh, that is, who remain under the influence of a corrupt and degenerate nature, do mind the things of the flesh; they prefer and pursue carnal and animal gratifications: but they who are after the Spirit, that is, who know anything experimentally of that Spirit of life which I mentioned above, (ver. 2,) [do mind] and pursue the things of the Spirit: their minds are formed to a superior relish of spiritual, intellectual, and sacred pleasures, suited to that nobler and immortal part of their nature.

6 Now as the character of these persons is so widely different, their end will be proportionably so; for the minding of the flesh, the preferring and pursuing its interests, [is] death; it is the greatest misery that can be imagined, and that which leads to everlasting death and ruin: whereas the minding, preferring and pursuing the interests of the Spirit [is] life and peace; the greatest present good and happiness which leads to life and glory everlasting. And it must needs be so, because the carnal mind, as I have described it above, [is] in the very essence of it an absolute enmity to the blessed God: from whom all life and peace and happiness proceed; and consequently it brings us into a state of hostility against him. For it is impossible his creatures should be in a state of friendship with him, unless they are in a state of willing submission to him. Now as for the carnal mind, it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can it possibly be [so.] For however you may suppose any law of God to vary, as to ritual and ceremonial institutions, while the nature of God continues pure and holy, as it must eternally and immutably do; he cannot but require the observation of the grand branches of moral virtue, founded on the unalterable nature and relation of things; be therefore must require us to be spiritually minded, and to prefer the interest of the soul to that of the body. So that they who are in the flesh, that is, under the government of a fleshly principle, whatever ceremonial precepts they may observe,

6 For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded, is life and peace:

7 Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.

8 So then they that

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a New the minding, &c.] It is plain, you must here signify now, for not being could be more absurd, than to say, that some minded the things of the flesh, because it is death to do it.

b The
are in the flesh, cannot please God.

9 But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.

10 And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life, because of righteousness.

11 But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead, dwell in you; he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies, by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.

12 Therefore, brethren,

observe, or whatever orthodox principles of faith they may profess and maintain, yet cannot possibly please God. He must either abhor and punish them, or dishonour his own law, and contradict his pure, holy, and unchangeable nature. 

But blessed be God, you Christians are not in the flesh, in that carnal enslaved state described above, but in the Spirit, and under his influence; ye, my brethren, are certainly so, if that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you; for wherever he dwells, he reigns and makes the soul thoroughly holy. And if any man have not the Spirit of Christ thus residing and governing in him, then, whatever he may pretend, he is none of his: he is not to be reckoned as a disciple of Christ, and Christ will disown him another day, as having only abused his name, while he wore it.

And by the way, to animate your hopes and all your graces, remember, that if Christ be thus resident in you, by his sanctifying Spirit, though the body is indeed dead, because of the first sin that ever entered into the world, which as I shewed above, has brought on a sentence of universal death; yet the spirit is life, and shall after death continue living, active and happy, because of that righteousness of which our great Head, the second Adam, is the Author, as I have incalculated at large. And we have this farther joyful hope, that if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus, our great Covenant-Head, from the dead, dwell in you, he that so powerfully and gloriously raised up Christ from the dead, will also, in due time, quicken your mortal bodies, though corrupted and consumed in the grave, by the agency of that great and powerful Spirit, which now dwelleth in you, and acts to quicken you in the Divine life.

Therefore, my dear brethren, since it is certain the gratifications of the flesh can do nothing for us like that which will be done for us at the resurrection, and since all present enjoyments are mean and worthless when compared with that; here is a most substantial argument for and

b The body is dead because of sin, &c.] Some would render it, with respect to sin; but as there is no seeming opposition between a death with respect to sin, and a life with respect to righteousness, I think the version here retained much preferable; and if this be admitted, it will certainly determine the sense of the next verse quite contrary to Mr. Locke's unnatural gloss, which explains, quickening the mortal body, by sanctifying the immortal spirit.
For the Spirit testifies that we are the children of God:

that mortification and sanctity which the gospel requires. And it necessarily follows, that we are debtors to the Spirit, which gives us such exalted hopes, and not unto the flesh, that we should live after the dictates, desires and appetites of the flesh. For I must plainly and faithfully tell you, and must repeat and inculcate it upon you, as a matter of infinite importance, that if you, though professing Christians, and some of you eminent for so high and distinguishing a profession, (Compare chap. i. 8,) do live after the flesh, and mind nothing superior to its interests, ye shall assuredly die, that is, shall perish by the sentence of an holy God, no less than if you were Jews or heathens. But if you, through the influence and assistance of God’s holy Spirit, and the exercise of those graces which he by regeneration has implanted in your souls, do mortify and subdue the deeds of the body, those carnal inclinations from whence all criminal indulgencies of the body arise, ye shall live: ye shall finally obtain a state of complete felicity, in spite of all that death can do to dissolve these animal bodies: not now to insist on that true rational delight which is only to be found here in such a course, and without which our abode on earth scarce deserves the name of life. Well may it be expected, that in this case you shall live for ever; since hereby your adoption of God, which must intitle you to a blissful immortality, will be approved. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, and humbly resign themselves to be guided whithersoever he will, by his sweet and secret influence on the soul, they are indeed the sons and daughters of God, and shall inherit eternal life with their heavenly Father: of which, indeed, if we are obedient to his holy dictates and motions, we already receive the earnest and foretastes. For ye, who are real Christians, have not received the spirit of bondage again unto fear; ye are not come under another dispensation like that of Moses, which was much more adapted to strike the mind with terror, and often produces a servile disposition; but,

13 For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.

14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

15 For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but

The spirit of bondage.] Both Mr. Locke and Mr. Pierce understand this of the fear of death, under which the legal dispensation left the Jews; but I rather understand it of that comparatively servile spirit which ran through the whole Mosaic economy, and which is finely illustrated by Dr. Evans, in his Sermon on this text. Evans’s Christian Temp. Vol. I.
If children, then heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ.

but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.

16 The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:

17 And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.

but, on the contrary, ye have received the Spirit of adoption, the confidence of children in approaching to God; by which Spirit, whatever our different nations and languages may be, we can, with equal joy and freedom, present our addresses to his throne, and cry with the overflowings of filial affection to him and fraternal love to each other, Abba, Father. For as the communication of the visible and extraordinary gifts of the Spirit both to Jews and Gentiles, witnesses that we are, without distinction, in this respect accepted and owned by God as his people; so also he himself, by his internal and gracious operations, beareth witness with the answer of our spirits, when seriously examined and interrogated, and gives us an inward and joyful assurance, that we are the children of God, and personally interested in his paternal love. And from hence, arises a most joyful and triumphant hope; for if we are his children, then we are undoubtedly heirs of a glorious and immortal inheritance: we are then heirs of God, and shall for ever enjoy him, as our gracious Father, whose presence and love is the very heaven of heaven. And we are also joint-heirs of Christ, we shall enjoy this happiness as with him, in his sight, and shall be formed to a resemblance of him, as the great foundation of that enjoyment. But then let it ever be remembered, that this is to be taken in connection; it is, provided that we are willing, not only to deny ourselves in prohibited carnal gratifications, and to govern our lives, by his precepts, but also to suffer with [him,] that is, in conformity to him, if called out to it for the honour of God, and for the testimony of a good conscience; that so we may also be glorified together with him, in that world where he now triumphs, and where all the infamy and pain we endure for his sake, shall be amply repaid with honours and joys everlasting.

IMPROVE-

a Abba, Father.] I suppose few of my readers will need to be informed, that the word abba signifies father, in the Jewish language, that is, the Syro-Chaldaic; and the insertion of it here beautifully represents the union of Jewish and Gentile believers in those devotions, which were dictated by a filial spirit.
IMPROVEMENT.

Well may we rejoice in privileges like these; well may we be astonished to think, that they should be bestowed on any of the children of men! That any of them should be heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; the adopted children of an heavenly Father, and marked out by the communications of his Spirit for an inheritance which he hath prepared! That they should be fitted and enabled to approach him with that endearing appellation, 15 Abba, Father, in their mouths! O that every one of us may know by experience, which alone can teach us, how sweet it is! and if we would obtain and secure this witness, let us see to it, that we be obediently led by the Spirit of God; for that Spirit is not where he does not effectually govern; and if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of Christ's disciples, nor is he entitled to any of the privileges of his people.

Let the matter therefore be seriously examined: and let it be determined by inquiry, whether we do on the whole walk after the flesh or the Spirit. Let us guard more and more against that carnal mind which is enmity against God, and cannot be subject to his law, nor leave room for us to please God, while it presides and governs in us. Let us often reflect upon that death which would be the consequence of our living after the flesh; and never conceive of ourselves upon any occasion as persons, who, in consequence of something that has already passed, have found out a way to break the connection here established, and in the nature of things essentially established between a carnal mind and death. May our spirits be more and more enlivened by that vital union with a Redeemer which may give us a part in the merit of his righteousness, and in the life it has secured for all true believers; and may the efficacy of his Spirit to raise our souls from a death of sin to a life of holiness, be in us a blessed earnest, that he will complete the work, and at length quicken our mortal bodies by his Spirit which dwelleth in us. When flesh and sense can administer a consolation like this, let us hearken to them: in the mean time, let us remember, let us always remember, how much we are debtors to the Spirit; and let us endeavour to act according to these immense obligations.
SECT. XVII.

The glorious prospects, which the gospel sets before us, are represented and urged as a further advantage which it gives us for holiness; even that consummate glory, the discovery of which the whole creation, now subject to vanity, seems to wait and call for. The apostle then mentions consolations which are derived from the assistances of the Spirit in prayer, as further illustrating his main design. Rom. VIII. 18—27.

 Romans VIII. 18.

For I reckon that the sufferings of the present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

 Romans VIII. 18.

In representing the high privileges of our adoption, I have been observing, that if, in consequence of our fidelity to our Saviour, we should suffer with him, we shall also be glorified together with him: and in this persecuted state in which, as Christians, we now are, I beseech you attentively to enter into this thought, that your hearts may be duly quickened, and fortified by it. I have for my own part been obliged, amidst the peculiar hazards of my apostolic office, frequently to weigh, and exactly to examine the matter; and I find upon the most deliberate computation, that the sufferings of the present time, how extreme soever they may be, are not worthy of any account at all, not so much as worthy of a mention, when set against that great and unalterable glory that shall in due time be revealed to us; but which at present exceeds even our most elevated conceptions, and can never be fully known, till we see each other wear it, and by consciousness feel it in ourselves.

These, my dear brethren, are the views with which I would animate your minds; and surely no object can give them more noble or more delightful employment. For methinks, when I look round upon the blasted and wretched state of this world of ours, it seems that all nature does, as it were, call aloud, in pathetic language, for that blessed change which the gospel was intended to introduce. The earnest expectation of the whole creation*, so far as it now lies accounted as difficult as any part of this epistle. The difficulty has perhaps been something encreased by rendering *earnest expectation of the creation, &c.* This and the following verses have been generally, and not without reason,
lies open to our view, is waiting for the revelation of the sons of God; for the happy time when he shall appear more openly to avow them, and that reproach and distress shall be rolled away under which they are now disguis-

ed and concealed. For the creation soon lost its original beauty and felicity; a sad change passed on man and his abode, so that all the visible face of nature was made subject to vanity and wretchedness in a variety of forms: and this not willingly, not by the personal misbehaviour of those who are now most deeply affected with it, but by him who subjected [it], that is, by Adam, when he stood at the head of our race, as a public person, and by his transgression brought us into so deplorable a state.

Deplorable indeed! but blessed be God not entirely abandoned; since it is still in hope, that the salvation so happily begun, shall at length be much more widely extended; that the creation shall, at least in ages to come, be set free from the bondage of corruption, by which men are now abusing themselves and the inferior creatures; and that they shall even be brought into the glorious liberty of which we Christians are possessed, in consequence of our being the sons of God; as it is certain the creation would be made inconceivably happier than it is, if this blessed dispensation, by which we are introduced into God's family, and taught to do our utmost to diffuse good to all around us, were universally to prevail. In the mean time, such is the state of the whole world, that it seems to call in the most importunate manner for this great interposition of Divine power and mercy in its favour; yea, I may say in reference to it we desire the remedy,) it is represented, as looking out with eager expectation (as the word ἀποφείξας exactly signifies,) for such a remedy and relief as the gospel brings, by the prevalence of which human nature would be rescued from vanity and corruption, and inferior creatures from tyranny and abuse. Nothing is more common, than to represent a land, as mourning or rejoicing, as calling for rain, &c. And if this be allowed to be the meaning of these three verses, the gradation in the 23d will be much more intelligible than on any other scheme that I know. See note b next page.

b Birth
And Christians groan for the redemption of the body.

we know that the whole creation, ever since the first apostacy of our nature from God, groaneth together, and travaileth together until now; it laboureth in strong pangs to bring on this important birth of sons and daughters unto the Most High. And not only doth the whole creation seem [so] to travail in pangs around us, when we survey those parts of it where the gospel is yet unknown, but even we Christians ourselves, who have received the first-fruits of the Spirit, and thereby have attained no inconsiderable degrees of liberty and deliverance, even we groan within ourselves under many remaining imperfections and burdens; while we are yet waiting with strong desire for the great event, which may, by way of eminence, be called our adoption; as it shall be the public declaration of it, when our heavenly Father shall produce us before the eyes of the whole world, habited and adorned as becomes his children. You will easily perceive I now refer to the redemption of our bodies, their final deliverance from the power of the grave at the general resurrection, which shall introduce us to a happiness, incomparably exceeding the freest and most glorious state into which the earth shall ever be brought even by the greatest triumph and prevalency of the gospel.

This, I say, we are longing and breathing after, and we shall still be so, while we continue here: for we are saved by hope; the firm belief and

b Bring on this important birth, &c.] It is indeed true, that to be in pangs like a woman in travail sometimes only signifies being in great distress, where there is no reference to any expected birth; but it seems to me very probable, that the apostle in these metaphors here alludes to what he had been saving before, (verses 14—17, 19, 21.) In all which places he describes Christians as the children of God, and so here expresses the general prevalency of the gospel, by the birth of many more, with which nature was pregnant, and of which it longed, as it were, to be delivered: therefore beautifully representing the sad condition of those, who while they have faculties fitting them for standing in such a relation to God, as his children, are lost in darkness and vanity, while ignorant of God and the way of salvation; during which time they were even pained by the excellency of their nature, it having no suitable object to act upon. And this is the well adjusted, but generally unobserved gradation I referred to above, note a; the world seems to wait, and call, and groan, for the spreading of the gospel; and those among whom it prevails, are still travelling, as it were, with the hope and desire of a yet more exalted state after the resurrection.

c The adoption, &c.] I entirely agree with Mr. Howe, (Works Vol. I. p. 680, 681,) that here is an allusion to the two kinds of adoption among the Romans; the first of which was private; the second, public in the forum, when the adopted person was solemnly declared and avowed to be the son of the adopter. Compare Luke xxii. 36.

d Deliverance, &c.] That redemption sometimes signifies deliverance, is very certain. Compare Luke xxi. 2; Eph. i. 14; Heb. xi. 35.

e Lendeth
In the mean time, the Spirit helps their infirmities.

and cheerful view of this complete salvation is our great security, amidst so many evils, temptations, and dangers. But hope which is seen, that hope which relates merely to objects now visible, is not worthy the name of hope. For what a man sees, how doth he yet hope for? the more we know of these worldly things, the less shall we amuse ourselves with any high hopes and expectations concerning them. But since we hope for what we see not, for a happiness far exceeding any thing we have ever seen, or can see, we patiently wait for it, and find something in the greatness of the prospect, to repay the tediousness of the most afflicted circumstances, and to excite us to prepare for it by cultivating a suitable temper in all its branches.

Such hope doth our holy profession administer to us, for our support amidst all the difficulties of our Christian course; and we have moreover this important privilege, that the Holy Spirit of God graciously lendeth us his helping hand: under all our burdens and infirmities; so that we are not left to sustain them alone: which is of vast moment in many respects, and particularly in the conduct of our devotions; for we are surrounded with so much ignorance and prejudice, that in many instances we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, because we know not on the whole what may be best for us: but the Spirit itself manages these affairs for us, guiding our minds to suitable petitions, and exciting in them correspondent affections, and sometimes inspiring us with that intense ardour of holy desire which no words can express, but must therefore vent themselves in unutterable groanings. But though we are not able to speak these desires, they are not concealed from God: he who searcheth the inmost recesses of human hearts, knoweth what [is] the mind of the Spirit; he reads all the secret agitations of our spirits which answer to the emotions of his; for he manages affairs for the saints according to the

hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?

But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.

Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities; for we know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.

And he that searcheth the hearts, knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.

Lendeth us his helping hand.] I know not how better to render that expressive phrase, παρασκευάζειν μας, which literally expresses the action of one who helps another to raise or bear a burden, by taking hold of it on one side, or lifting it or bearing it with him; and so it seems to intimate the obligation on us to exert our little strength, feeble as it is, in concurrence with this almighty aid.

The mind of the Spirit.] The phrase is here ἑκατέρας τοῦ πνεύματος, the very same that was used verse 6; and expresses not merely the meaning, but the temper and disposition of the mind, as under the influences of the Divine Spirit, pursuing and breathing after such blessings as suit its rational and immortal nature.

Manages
Reflections on the aid and first-fruits of the Spirit.

[the] gracious [will] and appointment [of] God: a circumstance which he cannot recollect without the greatest pleasure, and the most cheerful expectation of receiving every suitable blessing in consequence of it, and in answer to these prayers which are presented to God under such influence.

IMPROVEMENT.

For ever adored be the Divine goodness in sending down Ver. his Spirit on such sinful creatures, to help our infirmities: to im-26 plant, and to excite graces in our hearts, to be a source of present delight and of eternal happiness. May we feel him helping our infirmities, and improving our joy in the Lord, to such a degree, that all our devotion may be animated sacrifices. Let not the want of expression in that case trouble us; these unutterable groanings are sometimes the sweetest music in the ear of God.

Well may such fervent groanings be excited, when we view that great and glorious Object which the gospel proposes to our hope. Let us encounter the sufferings of the present time, with a fortitude becoming those that see them so short and so far over-balanced by the immense and boundless prospects which lie beyond them? prospects of unclouded lustre and unmingled felicity.

When we consider the state of that part of the world in which Christianity is unknown, or of those among whom it is a mere empty form; when we consider the vanity to which that part of God's creation is subject, let it move our compassion, and our prayers, that the state of glorious liberty in which God has already brought those who by faith in Christ are his children, may become more universally prevalent; and the knowledge of the Lord cover the earth as the waters cover the channel of the seas.

O that Divine and omnipotent grace may give a birth to that grand event, in the expectation of which nature seems in pangs; such a birth, that nations might be born in a day; and where the children are born, may it give a more abundant growth and more happy increase.

We have received what the travelling creation has not, the first-22 fruits

5 Manages affairs for the saints, &c.] I agree with a late ingenious writer, several times mentioned before, in rendering [the Vulgate] trahit operas sancti, translates affairs for the saints, as the office of an intercessor with God is so peculiarly that of Christ, our Advocate with the Father, 1 John ii. 1.

As for the phrase [the Vulgate] suum [sui], it is capable of many different significations; but I do not think it here signifies the same with [of the Vulgate] sibi, in the presence of God, but rather on the part of God, that is, by his appointment, or perhaps, as we render it, according to the will of God. I have therefore retained our version, and included both the senses in the paraphrase.
All things work together for good,

fruits of the Spirit, and they must surely excite us to groan after the redemption of our bodies: yet still with humble submission to the will of God, waiting his wisely appointed hour for the dissolution, and for the restoration of them. That God, in whose hand these important events are, best knows how long to exercise our faith, whether in this mortal world, or in the intermediate state; nor should any delay be esteemed long by those who have so cheerful an hope of enjoying God for ever.

SECT. XVIII.

The apostle represents other advantages for holiness which the gospel gives us; particularly those which arise from an assurance that all things shall work together for our good; and from the view we have, as true Christians, of an eternal gracious plan which God has laid for our happiness, in pursuance of which he hath already done such great things for us, especially in sending his Son for our redemption; whence his people may be assured, that no accusation shall prevail against them, and no temptation separate them from his love. Rom. VIII. 28, to the end.

ROMANS VIII. 23.

I have taken occasion to hint a many privileges, which, in consequence of partaking of the gospel, you enjoy: and now I must add this to the rest, that though our afflictions may lie heavy upon us, and though our burdens may continue long; yet we assuredly know, that all things which occur in the course of Divine Providence, either in their present and immediate, or future and more remote consequences, do, and shall work together for real and everlasting good to them that sincerely and prevalently love the blessed God; and are by Divine grace called, and formed to this happy principle, according to [his] gracious and effectual purpose.

We have this confidence, I say, because God in his eternal counsels designed this, and appointed a proper series of subordinate causes to make way

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* All things which occur in the course of Divine Providence, [&c.] It is so plain from the whole context, that the apostle only speaks of providential events, and it is so evident, that the universal expression all is sometimes to be taken in a limited sense, that it must argue, I fear, something worse than weakness, to pretend that sin is comprehended in the apostle's assertion. Plato's sentence so nearly parallel to this, is a commentary infinitely preferable to such an explication, "Whether a righteous man be in poverty, sickness, or any other calamity, we must conclude that it will turn to his advantage, either in life or death." See Plato de Rep. lib. ix.

b Whom
formed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren.

30 Moreover, whom he did predestinate them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.

*b Whom he foreknew, as the objects of his peculiarly favourable regards.] To know, sometimes signifies to favour, Amos iii. 2; 2 Tim. ii. 19; Exod. xxxvii. 12, 17; Psal. 6; Jer. x. 14, Rom. xi. 2; 1 Pet. i. 2; Hos. xiii. 5; and they who interpret these verses, as Mr. Locke, and many others do, of God's intending to bring the Gentiles into the church on a footing of equal privilege with the Jews, must certainly take the word in this sense. But the reader will easily perceive, by my paraphrase, that I consider them as applicable to all true Christians, whether originally of Jewish or Gentile descent; as the privileges themselves relate not to communities, as such, but to individuals.

c Whom he hath called, he hath justified.] Barclay pleads that this justification must include holiness, or it is left out of the chain. Barcl. Apol. p. 221. But the apostle had so plainly declared in the beginning of the chapter, that a freedom from condemnation was the peculiar privilege of those who walk after the Spirit; that it was the less necessary for him here distinctly to mention sanctification.

d Whom he justified he glorified.] It is plain, that justification is here considered as distinct from, and prior to, glorification; and

way for that blessed event in which all is to terminate; establishing a certain connection between the one and the other; a connection, which in the greatest distress is our confidence and our joy. For whom he foreknew, as the objects of his peculiarly favourable regards, knowing with everlasting complacency his own thoughts of peace towards them, (compare Jer. xxix. 2,) he did also predestinate [to] stand in a peculiar relation to the great Redeemer, and [be] made in due time conformable to the image of that glorious and blessed Person, even Jesus his only-begotten and best-beloved Son, who is now exalted high above all heavens. He appointed, I say, such a conformity between him and them, that he might be, and appear to be, the first-born among many brethren: and might at length see many of his brethren by his means sharing with him in that happiness to which he is now received, and in which he shall for ever shine, distinguished from them in all rays of peculiar glory. To this felicity did the Father of mercy decree to raise a part of our fallen and miserable race; and those whom he thus predestinated he in due time hath called, or will hereafter in their succeeding generations call, by the invitations of the gospel and operations of his Spirit, to repent and believe, that so they might claim the promised blessings, in virtue of that everlasting covenant which they cordially embrace; and whom he hath thus called, he hath, on their compliance with that call, justified, freed them from the condemning sentence of his law, and given them a pleadable right to a full acquittal at his bar; and those whom he hath thus justified, he hath also glorified, that is, he hath
appointed they should ere long attain to complete glory and happiness, to which, by virtue of their union with him, they may be said even now to arrive. (Eph. iii. 4.)

31 On the whole, what shall we therefore say to these things, or conclude upon this review? and say, If that God, who hath all power in himself, and all the events of time and eternity under his direction, [be,] as we have heard, for us, [who] can presume to [be] against us, or be able to do us any hurt by the nearest opposition, while we are guarded by such a Protector?

32 Yea, I may add, not only what have we to fear, but what have we not to hope and expect, in connection with such views as these? he hath spared not his own, his proper and only-begotten Son, when even his blood and life came into question, but willingly delivered him up to agony and death, that he might be a Sacrifice for us all, how shall he not with him freely grant us all other things, subservient to our truest happiness; which may now be regarded as the purchase of his blood? We may reasonably conclude that what is now with-held, would be detrimental, rather than advantageous to us.

33 Upon the whole then, we may take courage, and say, who shall lodge any accusation against the elect of God, against those who love him, and have been, as we before observed, predestinated

and consequently, that there is a sense in which believers may be said to be justified now (as they often are, compare Luke xviii. 14; Acts xiii. 39; Rom. v. 9; I Cor. vii. 11,) though it is at the great day, that their complete justification will be declared, and there seems generally to be an ultimate reference to that great transaction, in the use of this forensic term. (Matt. xii. 37; Rom. ii. 13; chap. iii. 30.) To suppose that Christians are said to be glorified merely in reference to the Spirit of glory now resting upon them, (1 Pet. iv. 14,) is limiting the phrase to a sense less sublime and extensive than it generally has, particularly ver. 17, 18; 2 Cor. iv. 17; Col. i. 27; chap. iii. 4; 1 Thess. ii. 12; 1 Pet. v. 10; to which a multitude of other texts might be added, where glory refers to the exaltation and blessedness of the future state.—This is a memorable instance, and there are scores, and perhaps hundreds more, in which things, that shall certainly and speedily be done, are spoken of as done already. Moses gave a remarkable example of this noble language of faith, in his song, (Exod. xv. 15, &c.) on the destruction of Pharaoh in the Red Sea; and the prophets and apostles have continued it in a variety of triumphant passages, which it will be a great pleasure to the pious reader to observe for himself.

*Who shall lodge any accusation, &c.] This word plainly signifies.—By the elect of God many understand the Gentiles; but it is certain, the phrase, whatever it imports, is not to be confined to them, and is presently after used of believing Jews, (Rom. xi. 5, 7, 28,) it seems highly reasonable, to consider it here, as including them also; especially as their unbelieving brethren might be ready to lodge the heaviest accusations against them, as deserters and apostates from their own laws, if they acted on the principles the apostles had been laying down in the former chapter.

f God
Christ is the advocate of his people;

nated and called according to his eternal pur-
pose? [is it?] God? What! he who himself jus-
tifieth!; as the prophet in his own case expresses
it, (Isa. 1. 8, 9) He is ready to answer all
objections, and solemnly to pronounce us absolv-
ed. Who [is] he then that condemneth? [is it]
the Lord Jesus Christ, whom we know to be
appointed as the final judge? What! doth he
condemn, who hath died to expiate our guilt, and
rescue us from condemnation? yea rather,(which
is the most delightful consideration of all,) who
is risen again! shall he undo the purposes of his
death and resurrection! He who is now sitting at
the right-hand of God, where he appears under
a quite contrary character, and is also making in-
tercession for us; undertaking the manage-
ment of our affairs, and far from accusing us, appears
ready to answer all accusations brought against
us, and to frustrate all the designs of our ene-
mies?

Confident therefore in his protection and fa-
vour, we defy them all; and say in strains of yet
sublimer triumph, who shall separate us from the
love of Christ? Who or what shall dissolve that
union to him, which is our great security, and
be able to alienate our hearts from him, who is
the Source of such invaluable blessings, and hath
displayed such incomparable riches of grace;
[Shall] the severest afflictions, g, or the most press-
ing straits, or the most cruel persecution, to the
inconveniences and extremities of which we may
indeed be exposed in our Christian warfare; or
hunger, if we be starving in desolate places h;
or nakedness, if it had not so much as sheep-skins
or goat-skins to cover it; or, in a word, any
other peril, to which in our different situations
we may be exposed, or even the drawn sword
of our blood-thirsty enemies ready to be plung-
ed into our defenceless bosoms! It may in-
deed

35 Who shall separate
us from the love of
Christ? shall tribula-
tion, or distress, or
persecution, or famine,
or nakedness, or peril,
or sword?

36 (As it is written, For

f God who justifieth, &c.] I here fol-
low the pointing proposed by the learned
and ingenious Dr. Sam. Harris, (in his
Observations, p. 34, 55.) which greatly
illustrates the spirit of this passage, and
shows, how justly that author adds, that
it is remarkably in the grand manner of De-
monstrations.

g Shall affliction, &c.] None can ima-
agine that Christ would love a good Chris-
tian the less for enduring such extremities
for his sake. The text must therefore be
intended to express the apostle's confi-
dence, that God's invariable love to his
people illustrated already in so glorious a
manner, would engage him to support
them under all their trials, by vital com-
munications of Divine strength.
h Hunger.] The word xixos is more
extensive than fasting, and may be applied
to personal, as well as public necessity.

Angelo.
Nothing therefore shall separate us from the love of Christ.

**DEED.**

as it is written, in words which may justly be applied to us, (Psal. xiv. 22.) "For thy sake we are without remorse killed all the day long, we are accounted as so many sheep destined to the slaughter, and delivered over to it without resistance on our part, or mercy on that of our enemies." Nevertheless, while we appear in so weak and helpless a state, we do in all these things more than conquer, we triumph in certain and illustrious victory, through him who hath loved us, and, having redeemed us to God by his own blood, will secure us amidst all these temptations, and finally shew that our sufferings and death have been precious in his sight, and have made a part in his merciful scheme for our more exalted happiness.

**33.** Well may I thus boast of the securest and completest victory, even amidst the combat; for I am persuaded, that neither the fear of death, in any imaginable form of terror, nor the hope and desire of life, in the most agreeable circumstances that can be imagined, nor all the efforts of infernal angels, nor of principalities, nor of powers, however various their rank, however subtle their artifices, however furious and malignant their rage may be, nor things present, difficult as they are, nor things future, extreme as they may possibly prove, Nor the height of prosperity, nor the depth of adversity, nor any other creature, above or beneath, in heaven, earth or hell, shall be able to separate any of us, who are Christians indeed, from the love of the Almighty and ever-blessed God, which is graciously given us in Christ Jesus our Lord, by a tenure so certain, that it shall never be lost: and being thus secure that nothing shall separate us from that, we assuredly know that nothing can, on the whole, hurt us; and feel a courage which nothing can dismay.

**IMPROVE.**

1 Angels, principalities and powers.] Elser, (Observ. Vol. II. p. 42.) has sufficiently shewn that good angels are sometimes called powers, to express their being used as instruments of the Divine power, (compare Eph. i. 21, chap. i. 10; Col. i. 16, chap. ii. 10,) as likewise that Archb. Tillotson thinks (Vol. I. p. 491,) Paul speaks thus confidently in reference to himself, and the experience he had passed through of so peculiar a nature; but he seems to me to found the argument on considerations common to all Christians, ver. 28, and the connection is such, that if these latter clauses are limited to St. Paul, I do not see how the preceding can be extended farther.
Reflections on the fruits of the everlasting love of God.

IMPROVEMENT.

O BLESSED souls indeed, who having been in the eternal coun-
cils of the Divine love foreknown and predestinated, are, in con-
sequence thereof, called and justified, as the earnest of being Ver.
long glorified! Who would not desire to see his own title to pri-
vileges so insteemable as these? And how shall we know that
we have our part in them? how but by securing an evidence, 28
that we love God? Then may we be assured that all things shall
work together for our good, and glory in that we are the elect
of God; to whose charge therefore nothing shall be alleged, since
God justifieth; whom none shall condemn, since Christ died to ex-
piate our sins, and is ascended into heaven continually to intercede
for us. In cheerful dependence on his patronage and care, let us
bid defiance to all our enemies, and be willing to submit to the
greatest extremities, since they shall not be able to separate us
from the love of Christ, even though for his sake we should be killed
all the day long, and accounted as sheep for the slaughter.

O blessed souls, whom neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor
any other creature, shall be able to divide and cut off from the love
of God! What then can harm us? what evil can we then suffer?
what good can we want? When God is for us, and when we are
sensible of his love, in giving us his Son, how can we allow ourselves
to suspect his readiness with him to give us all things truly reason-
able or desirable? All other blessings, when compared with these,
will appear unworthy of a mention; and we should have great
reason to suspect, that they were not ours, if we did not find a
heart superlatively to value them above every thing else.

SECT. XIX.

The apostle now finding it necessary to speak more expressly of the
rejection of the Jews, and the calling of the Gentiles, introduces
the subject with very tender expressions of his regard to his Jew-
ish brethren: and then shews, that the rejection of a considerable
part of the seed of Abraham, and even of the posterity of Isaac,
from the peculiar privileges of God's chosen people, was an in-
contestable fact, which the Jews could not but grant to have hap-
pened, that is, with regard to the descendants of Ishmael and of

Romans IX. 1.
I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my con-

Romans IX. 1.
THUS, my brethren, I have endeavoured to
animate you by leading your meditations to
those

G G 2
those inestimable privileges which we receive in virtue of the gospel, which renders us so far superior to all the hardships we can endure; and I hope the thought of them will be abundantly sufficient to establish your adherence to it. Faithfulness will also oblige me to add, that as all who embrace and obey this gospel, whether Jews or Gentiles, are accepted of God, so all who reject it, are rejected by him. And lest, while I maintain this important truth, any should imagine that I bear hard upon my dear countrymen the Jews, on account of any personal injury, which I, or my Christian brethren, of whose sufferings I have been speaking, (chap. viii. 35—39,) have received from them, or by their means; I begin this discourse with the most solemn assurance I can give you to the contrary. And herein I say the truth in Christ, I speak with that candour and integrity which becomes a Christian, and as in the presence of that blessed Redeemer who searches all hearts. He knows that I lie not; my conscience also bearing me witness as to the truth of what I say, in the Holy Ghost, as under his influence who so thoroughly discerns the soul on which he operates.

2 With all this solemnity, on so great an occasion, do I declare to you, that I have great grief, and incessant anguish in my heart, when I think of what hath happened, and will happen unto them, in consequence of their opposition to the gospel. For methinks, if I may be allowed to express myself so, I could even wish that as Christ subjected himself to the curse, that he might deliver us from it, so 

I myself likewise were made an anathema after the example of Christ; like him exposed to all the execrations of conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost.

2 That I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart.

3 For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ, for my

As all who embrace, &c.] This the apostle had intimated all along in the preceding discourse, which is addressed to Christians, as Christians, without any regard to their having been Jews or Gentiles; nay, he had expressly declared in the 2d and 3d chapters, that their having been Gentiles would be no obstruction. And it is certain, the peculiar oppositions and persecutions, which the believing Jews met with from their obstinate countrymen, would make encouragements and consolations like those suggested in the eighth chapter, as necessary for them as for any Christians in the world. So very much mistaken have some learned com-
of an enraged people, and even to the infamous and accursed death of crucifixion itself, for the sake of my brethren, and kinsmen, according to the flesh;

4 Who are Israelites: to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises;

5 Whose are the fathers, rejecting him; so that if they could all be centred in one person, he could be willing they should unite in him, could he thereby be a means of saving his countrymen. Compare Deut. vii. 26; Josh. vi. 17, chap. vii. 12.—Grotius understands it of a separation from the church of Christ, (which is sometimes called by the name of separation from the church of Christ, 1 Cor. xii. 12; Gal. iii. 27;) or of excommunication.—Elser, (who, agreeable to Dr. Clarke's interpretation, joins απὸ Χριστοῦ with χωρίον,) shows very well, as many other commentators have done, how very absurd it would be to suppose he meant, that he could be content to be delivered over to everlasting misery for the good of others.

c Who are Israelites.] The apostle, in great address, enumerates these privileges of the Jews; both that he might shew how honourably he thought of them and that he might awaken their solicitude not to sacrifice that Divine favour by which they had been so eminently and so long distinguished.

a The spiritual adoption is.] That is, whom God hath taken into a special covenant with himself, whereby he stands engaged ever to act the part of a God and Father to them, and to own them as his children. Deut. xvi. 1. Jer. xxxii. 9, Ex. iv. 22; Hos. xi. 1

e Resided on the mercy-seat.] Hence the ark was called the glory. Psal. lxvii. 61; 1 Sam. iv. 21, 22, to which some add, Psal. lixiii. 2.
Yet all the seed of Abraham are not the children of God;

the great fathers of the world and church; and from whom, to crown the whole, according to the flesh Christ himself is [descended] who, though found in fashion like a man, and truly partaker of our nature in all its sinless infirmities, is also possessed of a divine nature, by virtue of which, he is above all our conceptions and praises, above creatures of the highest order, and indeed, God blessed for ever, the worthy Object of our humblest adoration, as well as unreserved dependence, love and obedience: Amen: let his Divine glories be ever proclaimed and confessed! May all the house of Israel know this assuredly, and fall down before him, as in and with the Father of all, their Lord and their God!

Yet notwithstanding all these tender prejudices in favour of my own dear countrymen, I cannot defend or excuse their conduct; nor must I conceal the ungrateful truth asserted above, that by rejecting the gospel, they bring upon themselves rejection from God. But to prevent mistakes, let me in the first place observe, that it is not to be supposed, I would by any means insinuate, that the word of God hath fallen ineffectual to the ground, even all that glorious system of promises, by which he engaged to bestow protection, favour and happiness upon his people. For in order to provide against any allegation, I must insist upon it, as a very certain and apparent truth, that all [are] not reckoned to be the Israel of God, so as to be the heirs of the promises made to his people, who are descended of Israel by natural generation.

Neither because they are the seed of Abraham, the head of the holy family according to the flesh, are [they all] children, of the promise; but you know it is said. (Gen. xxii. 12,) though Ishmael were the son of Abraham long before, "In Isaac, then unborn, shall thy seed be called: the descendents of Isaac shall be spoken of

6 Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel:

7 Neither because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children; but in Isaac shall thy seed be called.

Above all, God blessed for ever.] How ingenious soever that conjecture may be thought, by which some would read this, we nere may answer to we are the Fathers, and whose is the supreme God: I think it would be extremely dangerous to follow this reading unsupported as it is by any critical authority of manuscripts, or ancient quotations. Nor can I find any authority for rendering Θεος εὐαγγέλιον το τω Ιωακείμ. God be blessed for ever. I must therefore render, and paraphrase and improve this memorable text as a proof of Christ's proper Deity, which I think the opposers of that doctrine have never been able, nor will ever be able to answer. Though common sense must teach, what Christians have always believed, that it is not with respect to the Father, but to the created world, that this august title is given to him. Compare 1 Cor. xv. 27, &c.

Greatly
of as thy seed, by way of eminence, to the exclusion of those who may spring from thee by thine other children." That is, on the whole, not the children of the flesh alone, nor any of them merely as such, [are] the children of God, but the children of the promise, in one peculiar line, are accounted as the seed of Abraham, and honoured with the adoption: For this [is] the word of the promise, Gen. xviii. 10, 4, "according to this time, that is, reckoning the conception of the child from hence, I will come [to thee] in a way of gracious and merciful interposition, and Sarah shall have a son;" which was said; when Hagar had many years been Abraham's wife, and had long since borne a son to him.

Nor was [this] the only instance of the kind: but in the case of Rebecca, when she was with child of twins by one man, that is, our father Isaac: While [the children] were not yet born, and had done neither good to merit, nor evil to forfeit, the Divine favour, that the sovereign purpose of God, according to his free election might stand stedfast, and appear not to be formed in respect of the works done by either, but according to the mere good pleasure of him who calleth things that do not yet exist into being, and disposeth of all according to his own will: It was said to her, when consulting the Divine oracle on the unusual commotion she felt in her womb, that two different people should proceed from the birth then approaching (Gen. xxv. 23,) and that the elder of them, that is, the posterity of Esau, should serve the younger that is the descendent of Jacob. As it is also written, (Mal, i. 2, 3,) "I have loved Jacob, and hated Esau, that is, I have greatly preferred the former to the latter, bestowing many
many peculiar privileges and favours upon the posterity of Jacob, which I have denied to that of Esau, whose habitation I have laid waste, for the dragons of the wilderness, while that of his brother flourished in the richest abundance of all things. We see then, to close this branch of the argument, that the exclusion of a considerable part of the seed of Abraham, and even of the descendants of Isaac, from the special promises of God, is not only a case which may be supposed possible, but a case, which according to the Jewish scriptures themselves, hath actually happened.

**IMPROVEMENT.**

Ver. Let that affection which the apostle expresses for the Jews, 1, 2 his countrymen and brethren according to the flesh, and the tender and pathetic representation which he makes of the privileges which they once enjoyed, awaken in our hearts an earnest solicitude, that they may by divine grace be brought back; that they may again be adopted into the family from which they have been cut off, again clothed with the glory which is departed from them; that, through him who was given for a covenant to the people, they may receive the law of life and grace, be formed to that spiritual service which it introduces, instead of their pompous ritual, and embrace the promises on which the faith and hope of their illustrious fathers was fixed.

3 Let it likewise teach us spiritual compassion for our kindred, who are strangers to Christ, and let us be willing to submit to the greatest difficulties, and think nothing too much to be done or borne for their recovery.

Let our souls pay an humble homage to him, who is, in such an incommunicable and sublime sense, the Son of God, as to be himself over all, God blessed for evermore. With prostrate reverence let us adore him, as our Lord, and our God, and repose that unbounded confidence in him which such an assemblage of Divine perfections will warrant, putting our most hearty amen to every ascription of glory, to every anthem of praise, addressed to him.

in support of this argument refer, Gen. xxxv. 25; Mal. 1. 3. His laying waste the heritage of the Edomites for the dragons of the wilderness, is so different a thing from his appointing the person of Esau to eternal misery by a mere act of sovereignty, without regard to any thing done or to be done by him to deserve it, that I will rather submit to any censure from my fellow-servants, than deal so freely with my Maker, as to conclude the one from the other.
And, to conclude, since we see that many of the children of Abraham, and of Isaac, failed of any share in the special promises of God, let us learn to depend on no privilege of birth, on no relation to the greatest and best of men. May we seek to be inserted into the family of God, by his adopting love in Christ Jesus, and to maintain the lively exercise of faith; without which no child of Abraham was ever acceptable to God, and with which none of the children of strangers have ever failed of a share in his mercy and favour.

SECT. XX.

The Apostle shews, that the sovereign choice of some individuals to peculiar privileges, to which none had any claim, and the sovereign appointment, from among many criminals, of some to peculiar and exemplary punishments, was perfectly consistent both with reason and scripture. Rom. IX. 14—24.

15 For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.

16 So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth,
And to make what sinners he will the monuments of his wrath.

And therefore, you see, to be referred into the forwardness of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth; but it is of God that sheweth mercy, to one rather than another, on sovereign reasons, which we cannot penetrate, but must always believe to be worthy of himself.

17 And moreover we may add, that such is the conduct of God in other instances, when of various sinners he appoints one, rather than another, to be a monument of special vengeance. For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I may remarkably shew forth my power in thee, and that my name, in consequence of distinguished judgments to be righteously inflicted upon thee, may be celebrated through all the earth, in the most distant nations and remotest ages.” And accordingly he hardened his heart, that he should not let Israel go; that is, he took measures which he knew would be attended with that effect, and at last brought the extremity of his wrath upon him. So then we must, after all our objections, rest the matter here, that the blessed God, as he is uncontrouable, so he is also unaccountable in his dispensations: that in choosing this or that creature to distinguished favours, or appointing this or that sinner to deserved punishment, he hath mercy on whom he will have mercy, and he hardeneth and destroyeth whom he will.

18 Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth.

a Moreover the scripture saith, &c. It is plain, that this is no proof of what immediately goes before; I therefore chose to render so; by moreover, which is consistent with making it introductory to what proves something asserted at some distance, if it came in as a coordinate proof. This is so important a remark in the illustration of scripture, and clears an attentive reader of so many embarrassments, that I hope I shall be excused repeating it on different occasions. The reader will observe, the Apostle does not produce an instance of an innocent person being made an object of Divine displeasure, out of mere sovereignty, but one of the most inculcent sinners that the world ever knew.

b I have raised thee up. Some would render it, I have made thee to stand, that is, I have supported thee during the former plagues, that I might make thee a more remarkable example of vengeance; but though (as Dr. Shuckford, Connect. Vol. II. p. 453, and many others observe,) that agree with διαγορά, the word used by the LXX. in their version of the text in question, and with the original שבעז, it does not answer to the Greek word used by St. Paul ἔγραψαι. If, as some writers suppose, the Pharaoh here spoken of were an Egyptian king, (I think Appollonius, who made his way to the throne by treachery, invest, and murder, the words ha have singular weight, in the sense we have given them, Mr. Taylor explains it of his having been recovered from the plague of boils, which was indeed said to have been upon Pharaoh, Exod. ix. 15, 16, and this may possibly be the true sense; but I think the other stronger and no less.

c Potter
19 Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault for who hath resisted his will?

20 Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? shall the thing formed say unto him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?

21 Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?

22 What if God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction:

**But thou wilt** perhaps be ready, while thou readest this declaration, to raise an objection against it, and say to me, If "God acts thus, why doth he then find fault, and blame his creatures for their obstinacy, when he determines to give them what he knows will in fact prove a prevailing occasion to it? Who hath ever, in any instance, resisted, or who can ever be able to resist his will? If he hath determined by such methods to destroy a nation, or a person, who can prevent it, or prevent those evils, which shall, according to his high appointments of Providence, be in fact the means of bringing on that destruction?"

**Nay, but** let me rather reply, Who art thou, O vain, weak and ignorant man, with all thy boasted wisdom and penetration, who art thou who thus arrogantly enterest into a debate with the all-wise, almighty and all-gracious God, and chargest his proceedings as arbitrary and unjust? Surely it becomes us, whenever we treat such a subject, to do it with the humblest reverence, and through the whole to remember the infinite distance between him and us. **Shall the thing formed say unto him that formed it?** Why hast thou made me thus? Let us remember he is our almighty Creator, and not imagine we can ever have any room or right to expostulate with him or in any circumstance to complain of him. **Hath not the potter power over **[his] clay,** as God himself represents the case. (Jer. xviii. 4—6,) out of the same mass to make one vessel to uses of honour, and another to the basest offices of dishonour; and to break and renew it at his pleasure? [What] then is it to thee, or what right hast thou to find fault, if God resolving at last to manifest the terrors of [his] wrath, and to make known his awful and tremendous power, in their aggravated destruction, hath in the mean time, endured with much long suffering those who shall finally appear to be the vessels of wrath which are fitted to destruction? Is he to account to

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c Potter power over [his] clay.] It is observable, that Plutarch uses the very same similitude with this before us; and Aristophanes, among other contemptuous expressions, by which he describes the frailty of human creatures, calls them plasmata pulvis, vessels of clay. See 1 Es. in be.
d Endures with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath, &c.] The apostle seems here to have had the imperious Jero in his thought, though he did not think it proper expressly to name him. It is certain, they were vessels of wrath, and that they were long home with, under many advantages, which they ungratefully abused.
to thee for punishing them who justly deserve punishment, at what time, and in what manner he pleases, and to ask thy leave to delay or to execute the stroke of his righteous vengeance. And [what if] on the other hand, that he may make known in the most affecting and endearing manner the riches of his glory, and display his compassions in those whom he will make the vessels of mercy, he graciously waits upon them, and [long endures] them, even [those] whom he hath, by the power of his own grace, previously prepared to glory, that they might in the most honourable manner be at length called to partake of it? Even us, whom he hath already called into the happy number of his people, not only of the Jews, but of the Gentiles too. Shall he make an apology to thee, O man, that he hath appointed some of our sinful race to such mercy, that he hath exercised much long-suffering towards them, that he hath at length wrought upon them by his effectual grace; or that determining to deal thus mercifully with some of Jacob's race, he hath added to their number others whom he hath taken from Gentile nations? Know thy place, and acquiesce in humble silence. Allow the blessed God to do what he will with his own, and let not thine eye be evil because he is good.

IMPROVEMENT.

Let us learn from the memorable section which we have now been reading, humbly to adore the righteousness and holiness of God, in all the most amazing displays of his sovereignty, which we are sure are always consistent with it. Let us own his right to confer on whom he pleaseth, those favours which none of us can pretend to have deserved; and adore his wonderful goodness, in chusing to exercise mercy and compassion on any of the children of men, yea, on many, who must own themselves in the number of those who had the least claim to it. He hath of his mere goodness given us those privileges, as Christians, and as persons of mercy, are spoken of: it being said simply of the former, that they were fitted for destruction, but of the latter, that God prepared them for glory. A distinction of so great importance, that I heartily wish we may ever keep it in view, to guard us against errors, on the right-hand, or on the left. Compare Mat. xxv. 30, 41, and the note there.
Protestants, which he hath with-held from most nations under heaven. And if we improve then aright, we have undoubtedly reason to look upon ourselves as vessels of mercy whom he is pre Ver. paring for eternal glory. Let us adore his distinguishing favour to us, and arrogate nothing to ourselves. It is neither of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth but of God that sheweth mercy, and worketh in us both to will, and to do, of his own good pleasure.

Long did his patience wait on us; and let that patience be for ever adored! It shall be glorified even in those that perish: for he is so far from destroying innocent creatures by a mere arbitrary act of power and terror, that he endureth with much long suffering, those who by their own incorrigible wickedness prove vessels of wrath, and whom the whole assembled world shall confess fitted for the destruction to which they shall finally be consigned. That after long abuse of mercy they are hardened, and perhaps after long hardness are at length destroyed: yea that some of the vilest of men are exalted by providence to a station that makes their crimes conspicuous, as those of Pharaoh, till at length he shews forth his power the more awfully, and maketh his name the more illustrious, by their ruin, is certainly consistent with that justice which the Judge of the whole earth will never violate.

But if in tracing subjects of this kind difficulties arise beyond the stretch of our feeble thought, let us remember that we are men, and let us not dare to reply against God. Retiring into our own ignorance and weakness, as those that are less than nothing; and vanity, before him, let us dread by any arrogant censure to offend him who has so uncontrollable a power over us. As clay in the hand of the potter, so are we in the hand of the Lord our God. Let us acquiesce in the form he has given us, in the rank he has assigned us; and instead of perplexing ourselves about those secrets of his councils, which it is impossible for us to penetrate, let us endeavour to purify ourselves from whatever would displease him; that so we may, in our respective stations, be vessels of honour, fit for the use of our Master now, and intitled to the promise of being acknowledged as his, in that glorious day when he shall make up his jewels.
The Apostle shews, that the admission of the Gentiles to the privileges of God's peculiar people, when Israel should be rejected, was so far from being inconsistent with scripture, that it had been actually foretold, both by Hosea and Isaiah. Rom. IX. 23, to the end.

Romans IX. 25.

As he saith also in Osee, I will call them my people, which were not my people; and her Beloved, which was not beloved.

Romans IX. 25.

I have been remonstrating as to the unreasonableness of quarrelling with the Divine dispensations, in distinguishing one creature from another, by his favours; or one sinner from another, by appointing him to peculiar severities of punishments, not exceeding the demerit of his offence: I will now venture, without farther reserve, to say, that in what I have been writing, I had some peculiar reference to God's calling so many of the Gentiles by the grace of his gospel, and his appointing the impenitent Jews to be monuments of wrath. And let me now address myself to the latter, and say, Who gave thee, O Jew, an authority to question and dispute with thy God on this occasion? Yea, is there on the whole any reason for thee, who hast the scripture of the Old Testament in thine hands, and professt a such a regard for them, so much as to be surprised at this, when there are so many hints of it in these divine oracles? As particularly in Hosea, where he hath spoken of calling Israel Loammi, as disowning them for their wickedness, and hath also said, (Hos. i. 10,) "I will call them my people, who were not my people before, and her Beloved, which was not for a long time beloved:" And it shall come to pass, [that] in the place where it was most expressly said to them, Ye [are] not my people, there shall they be called, not only the people,

a Call them my people, which were not my people.] It seems very evident from the connection of those words in Hosea, that they refer to God's purpose of restoring the Jews to the privileges of his people, after they had been a while rejected of him. But it is obvious, they might with great propriety be accommodated to the calling of the Gentiles; and indeed that great event might with some probability be inferred, partly from the temporary rejection of the Jews, of which this text spake, (for it was not to be imagined God would have no people in the world;) and partly, as it was in the nature of things more probable that he should call the heathen, than that he should restore the Jews, when he had cast them off for such ingratitude, as rendered them less worthy of his favour than the most idolatrous nations. Compare Jefferies True Grounds, p. 149.

b Cutting
be called, The children of the living God.

27 Esaias also crieth concerning Israel, Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved. 28 For he will finish the work, and cut it short in righteousness: because a short work will the Lord make upon the earth.

29 And as Esaias said before, Except the Lord of Sabbath had left us a seed, we had been as Sodoma, and been made like unto Gomorrah.

30 What shall we say then? That the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith:

31 But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness.
that dispensation by which alone righteousness and life is to be secured. And wherefore did they miss those blessings? Because they never heard of the way to Divine favour and acceptance? Nay; but because [they did] not [pursue it] by faith, whereby alone in this fallen state of our nature it is to be obtained; but merely, as if it was to be gained by the works of the law. For they in fact stumbled and fell at that stone of offence which lay in their way. As it is written in these ever-memorable words, (Isa. viii. 14; chap. xxviii. 16,) "Behold, I lay in Zion, that is, I exhibit in my church, what, though so well fitted to be a foundation of their happiness, shall in fact prove a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, that is, an occasion of sin and ruin to many, through their own prejudice and perverseness: and every one who believeth in him shall not be ashamed," shall not be brought under a necessity of seeking his refuge elsewhere, in helpless and hasty confusion, to which all they who slight him shall at last be reduced."

**IMPROVEMENT.**

How can we sinners of the Gentiles ever sufficiently acknowledge the goodness of God to us, in calling us to that full participation of gospel-blessings which we enjoy! That in our

Ver. native lands, where the name of the true God was so long un-known, we should have the honour of being called his children!

O that we may indeed be so, not only by an external profession, but by regenerating grace! May we be of that remnant, that little remnant, which shall be saved, when numbers countless as the sand of the sea, which had only the name of God’s Israel, shall perish, even in the day when his work shall be cut short in righteousness!

Blessed be God that there is a seed remaining. It is the preservation of the people among which it is found, and had it not been found among us, we had probably long since been made a seat of desolation. May it increase in the rising age, that the pledges of our continued peace and prosperity may be more assured, till our peace be like a river, and our salvation like the waves of the sea.

It will be so, if we be awakened seriously to enquire how we may be justified before God, and seek that invaluable blessing in the
The zeal of Israel for God not according to knowledge:  

The way here pointed out; if we seek it, not as by the works of the law, but by faith in Christ, as the Lord our righteousness. He hath, in this respect, been to many a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence. May Divine grace teach us the necessity of building upon him, of resting upon him the whole stress of our eternal hopes. Then shall they not sink into disappointment and ruin; then shall we not flee away ashamed in that awful day, when the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters of that final deluge of Divine wrath shall overflow every hiding-place, but that which God hath prepared for us in his own Son.

SECT. XXII.

The apostle shows, that God hath offered pardon and salvation on the same equitable, gracious, and easy terms to all; though Israel, by a bigotted attachment to their own law, rejected it. Rom. X. 1—13.

Romans X. 1.

Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved.

1 For I bear them record, that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge.

2 For I see, my brethren, to what this discourse of mine tends, in which I have been representing faith in Christ, as the only method to prevent our shame and ruin, without the exception of any, whether Jews or Gentiles, who should reject him. I know how unkind and unjust an interpretation may be put on such an assertion, though thus supported by the sacred oracles themselves; and therefore I think it proper to renew the assurances I before gave, that the most affectionate desire of my heart, in the accomplishment of which I should find the greatest complacency, and supplication which I am with daily importunity repeating before God concerning Israel, is for its present and eternal salvation and happiness; which I wish as sincerely as my own. For I am ready to testify, from what I well know of them by my own observation and experience: that they have a very ardent zeal for God; but I lament that it is a zeal not regulated according to knowledge, or directed into a right channel, in consequence of which it leads them into the most fatal mistakes and excesses. For they being ignorant of the righteousness of God, of the purity of his nature, the extent of his law, and the method which in consequence thereof he hath established for the justification of a sinner; and seeking with great diligence to establish and shew up, as

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H II
They being ignorant of the only way to obtain righteousness,
as it were, by the most insufficient props, the
ruinous edifice of their own righteousness, by the
observation of the precepts or expatiations
of their law, have not submitted with due
humility to the righteousness of God exhibited
in his Son, nor placed their own attempts of
obedience in a due subordination to that.

4 This is the most fatal error that can be ima-
gined; for how insensible soever Israel in gen-
eral may be of it, it is on the whole most certain
that Christ [is] the end of the law for righteous-
ness to every one that believeth, that is, it is the
great scope and design of the law to bring men
to believe in Christ for righteousness and life,
and its ceremonial and moral precepts and con-

sitions most harmoniously center in this. For
Moses most exactly describeth the only way of
righteousness which is attainable by the law,
[when he saith] again and again, (Lev. xviii. 5,
compared with Deut. xxvii. 26,) the man who
doeth them shall live in and by them, that is,
the man who perfectly observes these precepts
in every particular, and in every punctilio, he,
and he alone, if such a person there be, may
claim life and salvation by them. Now this is a
way of justification, which when the law has
once been broken, becomes absolutely imposi-
tible to the transgressor. But the righteousness
which is by faith speaketh a very different lan-
guage, and may be considered as expressing it-
self thus, (If I may be allowed to borrow the
words of the great Jewish legislator, when re-
representing the plainness and perspicuity of his
law;

* Observations of the precepts or expatiations of their law.] Many writers, and
especially the late Dr. Sherlock, in his book of the knowledge of Christ, have been
much mistaken in the representation they have made of the Pharisaical righteous-
ness, as if it consisted merely in substituting ceremonial observances, instead of
moral duties. The Pharisees certainly in-
calculated the external duties of morality,
how much soever they might themselves fail in observing them, or rest merely in
outward acts; but they trusted in legal expatiation to procure the pardon of those
evils which might happen; and the com-
position of those, if I may be allowed the
expression, constituted the righteousness
which they went about gainst, to establish,
or prop up, decrepit as it was.

4 For Christ is the
end of the law for
righteousness to every
one that believeth.

5 For Moses describ-
eth the righteousness
which is of the law,
That the man which
doeth those things
shall live by them.

6 But the righteous-
ness which is of faith,
speaketh on this wise,
Say not in thine heart,
Who shall ascend in-
to
to heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above;)

7 Or Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead)

8 But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith which we preach,

9 That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart, that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.

10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made into salvation.

11 For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth
Reflections on the clear knowledge we have in the gospel.

Rom. X. 12.

ashamea, and put to confusion, in any imagin
able circumstance.” Every one without
 distinction, for, you see, there is no difference
 between Jew and Greek. For the same Lord of
 all, the Creator, Governor, Preserver, and Be-
 nefactor of the whole human species, displays
 his riches, and magnifies his bounty, to all that
call upon him, imparting to them all the same
blessings of his providence and grace. For
whosoever shall invoke the name of the Lord shall
be saved⁴, as the prophet Joel testifies, (Joel ii.
32,) when he had been speaking of those great
events which have in part been so wonderfully
accomplished in the effusion of the Spirit, and
shall be farther fulfilled in those scenes of Pro-
vidence which are shortly to open on the Jewish
nation.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. Let our hearts, after the example of St. Paul here before us,
be overflowing with love and compassion to our brethren; and
let us be earnestly interceding with God for their salvation. Where
we see, a zeal for God, let us pay all due regard to it, and com-
passionate that ignorance which may sometimes be mingled with it;
especially if it affect so important an article as that of our becom-
ing righteous before God by a better righteousness than our own.
Let us pray that God would teach us, and would enable us, ac-
cording to our respective situations, in a proper manner to teach
others, that Christ is indeed the end of the law, of all the laws
which God ever gave to fallen man, for righteousness; all were
intended to convince men of their need of coming to him, that
righteousness and life may be obtained.

Great reason have we to adore the Divine goodness, and to
congratulate ourselves, and one another, upon our great happiness
in this respect, that God hath given us a revelation, so obvious
and intelligible in all the grand points of it. We have indeed no
necessity, no temptation to say, Who shall go up into heaven? or
Who shall descend into the deep? or, Who, like the illustrious,
but bewildered, sages of antiquity, shall cross the seas, to bring
that knowledge from distant countries, which is wanting in our
own? The word is nigh to us: It is indeed in our mouth: O that
it may be in our heart too. We know a descending, a risen
Redeemer. He still visits us in his gospel, still preaches in our
assemblies.

¹ Invok the name of the Lord, &c.] Bishop Pearson argues at large from hence,
that if Christ be not here called Jehovah,
the apostle's argument is quite inconclus-
ive. Pearson on the Creed, p. 149.
assemblies, and stretches out a gentle and compassionate hand to lead us in the way to happiness. May our profession of faith in him be cordial; and then it will be open and courageous, what ever sacrifices we may be called to make. Believing on him, we 9, 10 shall not be ashamed; calling on his name, we shall be saved; though we can meet with nothing but despair from a dispensation, that saith, The man who perfectly doth these precepts, shall live by 5 them.

SECT. XXIII.

The Apostle pursues the view given in the last section, and shews, that the gospel had been diffused widely through the world; though according to other prophecies, which he here mentions from Moses, and Isaiah, the Jews had rejected it, while the Gentiles embraced it. Rom. X. 14, to the end.

Romans X. 14.
How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?

Romans X. 14.

From the promise of salvation to them that shall call on the name of the Lord, I have just been inferring, (ver. 12, 13,) that there is no difference between Jews and Gentiles, as to the possibility of obtaining salvation from God. And from hence, we may farther infer what is very sufficient to justify me and my brethren, in preaching the gospel to the Gentiles, though we are the objects of so much reproach and persecution on that account. Let us therefore attend to the inference. For how shall they call on him on whom they have not believed, as worthy to be invoked with Divine honours and adoration? and how shall they believe on him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear of him without a preacher to carry these important tidings which the light of nature could never be able to discover? And, as for the ministers of the gospel, how should they preach except they be sent expressly for that purpose? For, as we were originally Jews, our own prejudices on this head were so strong, that we should never have thought of carrying the gospel to the Gentiles, if God had not particularly charged us to do it. But blessed be God, that the charge has been given, and the embassy sent; and most welcome should it be to all that receive it, as it is written and described in that lively prophecy.
For faith is by hearing, and hearing by the word.

Sect. X. 13.

16 But alas, all have not obeyed the gospel, glorious as its tidings are, nor given it that cordial reception which its happy contents might well have demanded. And they who are well acquainted with the oracles of the Old Testament, and study them impartially, will not be surprised at it. For Isaiah saith, in that very context, which contains so many illustrious testimonies to the cause in which we are engaged, (Isa. lii. 1) "Lord, who hath believed our report, and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed, and made bare?" Faith indeed [cometh] by hearing, and hearing in the case now before us by the word, the express command of God, to make the declaration. It is therefore our duty to deliver the message, wheresoever we come, whether to Jews or Gentiles, in humble hope, that some will believe; though we have so much reason to fear that many will reject it.

18 This is our duty, but a duty which we cannot perform without some discouragements; yet I may confidently say, it hath in the main been practised; and I may appeal to what you at Rome knew of the matter, in consequence of your

a In that lively prophecy.] Most commentators think, that the liid. chapter of Isaiah is to be explained as a prophecy of the return of the Jews from Babylon, and that the text here quoted refers to the joyful welcome that should be given to the messengers who brought the first tidings of Cyrus' decree for their dismissal. And if it were so, the apostle might very justly infer from thence the superior joy with which the messengers of the gospel should be received. But I think, a great deal may be said to show it probable, that the context in question has in its original sense a further reference. Compare Isa. lii. 4-6. But not judging it necessary, in the paraphrase, to build upon it as an argument, I shall not by any means discuss the matter here.

b The very footsteps.] 1. 'Enfant thinks the feet are put for the arrival. Compare Gen. xxv. 50. in the original. But I think the turn given in the paraphrase, illustrates it much better. Bos observes, that in Sophocles, the hands and feet of those who come upon a kind design, are represented as beautiful to those who receive benefit by their arrival.

c Faith indeed [cometh.] Mr. L'Enfant would transposes the 16th and 17th vers 1; and it is certain, as any one may easily perceive, that the connection of all from the 15th to the 16th, would in that view be clearer; but as no copes warrant it, I think it is by no means to be presumed upon. I have therefore translated απειρ., which is often a sort of an explicative, by the word indeed, which throws this verse into some kind of connection with the νιτ., and if referred to απειρ. there, will I hope be thought agreeable enough to the Greek Idiom.
went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world.

19 But I say, Did not Israel know? First, Moses saith, I will provoke you to jealousy by them that are no people, and by a foolish nation I will anger you.

20 But Esaias is very bold, and saith, I was found of them that sought me not; I was made manifest unto them that asked not after me.

21 But to Israel he saith, All day long I have stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people.

your correspondence with all parts of the empire. Have they not heard of the gospel all abroad, so that I may take up the words of David, (Psal. xix. 4,) when describing the course of the celestial luminaries, and apply them to the zeal, and in some measure to the success, with which the missionaries of this holy religion have exerted themselves, assisted by the blessed Spirit of God, and animated by the hope of that glorious immortality to which they have taught others to aspire. Of them may I say, that “verily their voice is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world:” many distant nations have already heard these glad tidings which God will at length render universal. (Col. i. 6, 23.)

But I may farther say, Hath not Israel known or had an opportunity not only of knowing that the gospel should be preached, but that it should be carried to the Gentiles too; For first, Moses saith, in that celebrated song of his, which the children in all generations were to learn, (Deut. xxxii. 21,) “I will raise your jealousy by [those who were] not a nation, [and] your anger with a foolish people;” which may well be understood as ultimately referring to this great scheme. And Isaiah hath the boldness to say, 20 in a context, where so many things evidently refer to the gospel, (Isa. lxv. 1, 2,) “I was found of them that sought me not; I was made manifest to them that inquired not for me, nor discovered any concern to be informed of my nature, or my will;” Whereas, invidious as he knew it would be to a nation so impatient of rebuke, with relation to Israel he saith, in the very next verse, “All the day long have I stretched out mine hands, in the most importunate and affectionate addresses, to a disobedient and gainsaying people, who are continually objecting and cavilling; whom no persuasion can win to regard their own happiness, so as to be willing to admit the evidence of truth, and the counsels of wisdom.” It appears then on the whole, that since the prophets so plainly foretold that the Gentiles should be called and the Jews rejected, it is no way unbecoming my character, as a messenger from God, and a friend to the Jewish nation, to assert the same, and to act upon it.
IMPROVEMENT.

Blessed be God for the preaching of the gospel, so absolutely necessary to that faith without which we can have no well-grounded hope of salvation. Blessed be God therefore for the mission of his ministers, and for his abundant goodness, in sending them to us sinners of the Gentiles. Let us give them a respectful and attentive hearing, and say, How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of those that preach salvation, that publish peace! And let us take great care, that we do not only speak respectfully of their doctrine, but that we comply with the purposes of their embassy.

It is matter of continual joy to reflect, not only that God hath afforded to all men such means of attaining Divine knowledge, by the intimation of it which he hath given in the constitutions of the heavenly bodies, and in the whole frame of visible nature; but also, that he hath sent the express messages of grace to so many millions, in the extensive publication of his gospel. Let us rejoice in the spread it hath already had, and let us earnestly and daily pray, that the voice of those divine messengers, that proclaim it, may go forth unto all the earth, and their words reach in a literal sense to the remotest ends of our habitable world. Let us pray, that wherever the word of God hath a free course, it may be more abundantly glorified; and that its ministers may not have so much reason to say, Who hath believed our report? and to complain of stretching out their hands all the day long to a disobedient and gain-saying people. Exert, O Lord God, thine almighty arm, make it bare in the sight of all the nations. Shed abroad thy saving influences on the hearts of multitudes, that they may believe, and turn unto the Lord! May the great Saviour of his Israel be found of those that seek him not, and by the surprising condescensions of his grace, may he manifest himself to those that do not inquire after him.

And may his ancient people not only be provoked to anger, but awakened to emulation too; and put in their claim for those blessings which God has by his Son vouchsafed to offer to all the Gentiles.

SECT. XXIV.

The Apostle shews, that though the rejection of Israel be, for the present, general, according to their own prophecies, and attended with astonishing blindness and obstinacy, yet it is not total; there being still a number of happy believers among them. Rom. XI. 1—10.

We have seen, my brethren, how the perverseness of the Jews, and the calling of the Romans XI. 1.

Romans XI. 1.

I SAY then, Hath God cast away his People? God forbid For
But there is a remnant according to the election of grace.

For I am also an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin.

2 God had not cast away his people which he foreknew. Wot ye not what the Scripture saith of Elias? how he maketh intercession to God against Israel, saying,

3 Lord, they have killed thy prophets, and digged down thine altars; and I am left alone, and they seek my life.

4 But what saith the answer of God unto him? I have reserved to myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal.

5 Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace.

6 And if by grace, then is it no more of works:

a Digged up thine altars.] It seems from hence, that, though according to the text there was only one altar of sacrifice, and that in the place where God had fixed his peculiar residence; yet, by some special dispensation, pious persons in the ten tribes built altars elsewhere. It is well known, at least, that Samuel, and Elijah had done it, and perhaps, they were either kept up, or others raised on the same spots of ground.

b The election of grace.] Some explain this of their having chosen grace, that is, the gospel, but that turn is very unnatural, and neither suits the phrase nor the connection with the former clause, or with the next verse, in which the apostle comments on his own words.

c Else
The rest were blinded, and their privileges became a snare.

7 But, to return from this short digression, what then do we conclude? What, but this, that Israel hath not obtained that justification and righteousness which it has sought, nor retained these particular privileges of the church of God which they pretend entirely to engross: but the election, the chosen remnant, hath obtained it, having been by Divine grace engaged to embrace the gospel; whereas the rest were blinded by their own fatal prejudices, to which God hath, in righteous judgment given them up. According as it is written, (Isa. xxix. 10. Compare Deut. xxxix. 4. and Isa. vi. 10,) God hath given them a spirit of slumber; eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear. He threatened, you see, to punish their perverseness, when it should come to a certain degree, by abandoning them to increasing stupidity and obstinacy, and he hath done it even unto this day: for their blindness continues, notwithstanding all the extraordinary things which have been done, even in our own age of wonders, for their conviction. And this is agreeable to what David hath said, in that prophetical imprecation which is applicable to them, as well as to Judas, (Psal. lxix. 22, 23; compare Acts i. 20,) Let all the blessings of their most plentiful table become a snare to them, and that which should, according to its original use and intention, have been works; otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then it is no more grace; otherwise work is no more work.

7 What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded:

8 According as it is written, God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear, unto this day.

9 And David saith, Let their table be made a snare, and a trap, and a

c Else grace is no longer grace; &c.] Some interpret this, "The gospel would not deserve the name of grace, if the observation of the Mosaic law were to be taken in as a part of the terms of our acceptance with God." But this would have been a strange position. Who, that in any degree knew the terrors of God's anger, would not most gladly have accepted of the full pardon the gospel offers, on much more rigorous terms than obedience to the Mosaic ritual. The meaning rather seems to be, "what is given to works is the payment of a debt, whereas the notion of grace implies an unmerited favor; so that the same benefit cannot, at the same time, be derived from both." This seems to be a reflection on the riches of Divine grace, which the apostle makes by the way, and which well agrees with the fulness of his heart on this subject.
Reflections on the remnant God hath reserved to himself.

10 Let there eyes be darkened that they may not see, and bow down their backs alway.

been for their welfare, a trap. Thus the gospel, which should have been the means of their salvation, is now become an instrument of ruin and destruction to them, and an occasion of stumbling in the most fatal manner. And it must be acknowledged to be a just recompence for their wickedness; that the best of blessings should thus be turned into a curse to them, that so ungratefully rejected and despised it. And in them the following words are also fulfilled, Let 10 their eyes be darkened, that they may not see, and keep their back continually bent down, under a perpetual weight of sorrows, which they may not be able to support, and which may be a just punishment upon them for having rejected so easy a yoke. (Compare Lev. xxvi. 13.)

IMPROVEMENT.

Let us learn from the answer of God to Elijah, when he Ver thought himself left alone, and knew nothing of the seven thou-sand which God had reserved; to encourage ourselves in a secret hope, that there may be much more goodness in the world than we are particularly aware of. The numbers of those that constitute the invisible church, are unknown to us, but they are known to God. They are all registered in the book of his remembrance, as they are all reserved unto himself by his grace; nor shall his people whom he hath foreknown be cast away. May we be of that blessed number; and may the degeneracy, which we see so prevalent around us, animate us to a holy zeal, to hold fast our own integrity: yea, to seize the occasion of approving it in a more acceptable manner, from a circumstance, in every other view, greatly to be lamented.

Let us often reflect upon this great and important truth so frequently inculcated upon us in the word of God, that it is to his grace, and not to any works of our own, that we are to ascribe our acceptance with him. And let the ministers of Christ be ready, after the example of the apostle, sometimes to turn, as it were, out of the way, to dwell a little on a thought, at once so humbling, and so reviving.

We see the miserable circumstances of God's ancient Israel, given up to a spirit of slumber, to blind eyes, and to deaf ears. O let us take heed, that we do not imitate their obstinacy and folly; lest God make our own wickedness our destruction; lest he send a curse upon us, and curse our blessings, so that our table should become a snare to us, our temporal enjoyments, or our spir-
ritual privileges. Lord, let us often say, Give us any plague, rather than the plague of the heart; and bow down our backs under any Ver. load of affliction, rather than that which shall at last crush those 10 who have refused to accept of thy gospel, and to take upon their shoulders the light burden which a gracious Saviour would lay upon them.

SECT. XXV.

The Apostle shows in this and the next section that the rejection of Israel is not final; but that the time shall come, when, to the unspeakable joy of the Christian world, the Jewish nation shall be brought into the church of Christ. Rom. XI. 11—24.

ROMANS XI. 11.

I HAVE asserted above the rejection of the Jewish nation in general; yet I have observed, that it is not total, so that none of them should remain objects of mercy. And do I assert it to be final? Do I then say, they have so stumbled, as that, as a nation, they should fall into irrecoverable ruin, and never more be owned by God as his people? God forbid! but I assert that by this fall of theirs, salvation [is] at the present [come] to the Gentiles; the future consequence of which shall be to provoke them to a holy emulation of sharing the blessings and benefits to be expected from their own Messiah, when they shall see so many heathen nations enjoy them.

12 But these should be no unwelcome tidings to you Gentiles: for if their [fall] be by accident the riches of the world, and their diminution the riches of the Gentiles, by scattering the preachers of the gospel among them, by proving our veracity and integrity, and in some measure exciting compassion too; though their rejecting us, in itself considered, might rather appear as an argument against it; how much more shall the bringing in their whole fulness, that is, the whole body of the Jewish nation, be a means of propagating the gospel much farther, and recovering multitudes, by whom it hath been rejected, from their scepticism and infidelity, when so great an event appears in accomplishment of its known predictions a. For I now speak to you

a Accomplishment of its known predictions.] So many of the prophecies of the Old Testament, do evidently refer to the reduction of the Jews into their own land,
you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office;

14 If by any means I may provoke to emulation them which are my flesh, and might save some of them.

15 For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world; what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?

16 For if the first fruit land, as the people of the Messiah, that I can by no means doubt of the certainty of that event. Compare Isa. xxvii. 15, 13; Ezek. xi. 17—21; chap. xx. 24—44; chap. xxxiv. 13, 14; chap. xxxv. 25—29; chap. xxxvi. 24—28; chap. xxxvii. 21—25; Amos ix. 14, 15; Obad. ver. 17; Mic. vii. 14, 15; Zechar. xiv. 10, 11. Ios. 1, 10, 11. And the wonderful preservation of them as a distinct people, thus far, not only leaves a possibility of this great event, but encourages our hope of it. When it shall be accomplished, it will be so unparalleled, as necessarily to excite a general attention, and to fix upon men's minds, such an almost irresistible demonstration both of the Old and New Testament revelation as will probably captivate the minds of many thousands of deists, in countries professedly christian, (of which, under such corrupt establishments as generally prevail, there will of course be increasing multitudes;) nor will this only captivate their understanding, but will have the greatest tendency to awaken a sense of true religion in their hearts; and this will be a means of propagating the gospel with an amazing velocity in Pagan and Mahometan countries; which probably had been evangelized long ago, had genuine christianity prevailed in those who have made a profession, and God knows, for the most part, a very scandalous profession of its forms.—The 15th verse has so natural a connection with the 16th, that Eisner includes the 15th and 16th in a parenthesis.

b Also to theirs.] Perhaps we can no where find an instance of a more popular and affectionate turn than this, in which the apostle seems to find a reason for his zeal to convert the Gentiles, in his love to his own countrymen the Jews.

e Wild
Yet the Gentiles were not to boast against the Jews.

The consecration of them was looked upon as in effect the consecration of all. And so would I look upon the conversion of some few of the Jewish nation, as an earnest of the conversion of all the rest. And so much the rather, when I consider, how eminently dear to God, those pious patriarchs were from whom they have descended: for if the root be holy, the branches are likewise so, and will surely at length be regarded as such. And this, though some of them be at present in so melancholy a state; for if some of the branches were broken off, and thou, O Gentile, being, as it were, a scion of a wild olive, wast grafted in among them that remained, and art with them partaker of, and nourished by, the root and fatness of the good olive; being not only a graft upon another stock, but a meaner graft on a stock originally nobler and more excellent:

Boast not thyself presumptuously and ungratefully against the natural branches; and if thou boastest, [remember] to thy humiliation, [that] thou bearest not the root, but the root thee. Thou hast received many benefits from Abraham’s seed, and the covenant made with him, but they have received none from thee. Wilt thou therefore object, and say, “The natural branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in; and therefore we may glory over them as they once did over us?” Well, take this thought at least along with thee, they were broken off for [their] infidelity, and thou liest to standest in their place, through faith. Therefore be not high-minded and arrogant, but fear, lest thou by thy sins forfeit the privileges to which thou art so wonderfully raised. For if God spared not the branches, which were according to nature, neither will he by any means spare thee, if thine unbelief make thee, after all thy peculiar obligations, as bad, and in that respect, fruit be holy, the lump is also holy; and if the root be holy, so are the branches.

17 And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou being a wild olive-tree, wast grafted in amongst them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive-tree;

18 Boast not against the branches: but if thou boast thouarest not the root, but the root thee.

19 Thou wilt say then, The branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in.

20 Well; because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not high-minded, but fear.

21 For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee.

c Wild olive grafted in among them.] It is very improper to object, that it is unnatural to suppose an ignoble branch grafted on a rich stock; for it was not necessary that the vine taken from inoculation should hold in all its particulars; and the engagement to humility arises in a considerable degree from the circumstance objected against. Had the scion been nobler than the stock, its dependence on it for life and nourishment, would render it unfit that it should boast against it; how much more, when the case was the reverse of what in human usage is practised, and the wild olive is ingrafted on the good.

* Be not high-minded, &c.] Archbishop Talbot well observes, that this caution ill suits the claim to infallibility, which the modern church of Rome, so arrogantly makes, amidst all the absurdities with which her doctrine, and her ritual are loaded.
22 Behold therefore the goodness, and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but towards thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness. Otherwise thou also shalt be cut off.

23 And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in: for God is able to graft them in again.

24 For if thou wert cut out of the olive-tree which is wild by nature, and wert grafted contrary to nature into a good olive-tree; how much more shall these which be the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive-tree?

respect, even worse, than they. Behold therefore, on the whole, a remarkable display of the intermingled goodness and severity of God, and endeavour to improve both! Towards them that fell, thou indeed seest a memorable instance of his severity; but to thee, a display of gentleness and goodness, if thou wilt be careful to continue in [his] goodness and endeavour gratefully and dutifully to improve it; else thou also shalt be cut off; for the blessed God will not bear always to be insulted with the petulance of sinners. And I would have you farther to consider, as a motive to think of the Jews with respect, rather than contempt, that they also, if they do not continue in their unbelief, shall be grafted on again, and restored to their former privileges. For it is certain, God is able again to ingraft them: hopeless as their state may seem, both with respect to their obstinacy and their misery, his powerful access to their mind can subdue their prejudices against the gospel as thou mayest easily argue from what thou hast thyself experienced. For if thou wert, as I may properly enough express it, cut off from the olive tree which was naturally wild, and contrary to the course and process of nature, wert grafted on the good olive-tree; if thou wert admitted into covenant with God, though descended from parents that were strangers and enemies, how much more shall they who are the natural branches to whom the promises do originally belong, be grafted on their own olive? God will not seem to do so wonderful a thing, in restoring them to what might seem the privilege of their birth right and descent, and saving the seed of Abraham his friend; as he hath done, in calling you sinners of the Gentiles, to participate the blessings of which you had not the least notion, and to which you cannot be supposed to have had any imaginable claim.

IMPROVEMENT.

Let us set ourselves seriously to pause upon the conduct of God towards the Jews and Gentiles in that part of it which the apostle here describes, and rejoice with trembling in it. Let us reflect on the Divine severity to them, and the Divine goodness to us.
us. What immense goodness! That we should be taken from
that wretched condition in which we were utterly ignorant of the
ver. great Author and end of our being, of the nature of true hap-'
ness, and the way of obtaining it; that we and our offspring
might be grafted on the good stock; be called to the most important
of those privileges and hopes with which the seed of Abraham were
honoured and enriched. We partake of the fulness of the good
olive; may our fruit abound to the honour of God, to the benefit
of mankind.

Let us cherish the most benevolent and tender disposition to-
wards the house of Israel, to whose spiritual privileges we are
raised; and let us earnestly pray that they may be awakened to
emulation; especially as their fulness is to be the riches of the
Gentiles, and the receiving them again, as life from the dead to the
languishing and decaying church.

In the mean time, as the gospel comes to us in so awful a man-
er, vindicated from the contempt of former despisers, let us
solemnly charge upon our souls this lesson of holy caution, these
salutary words, (O that they may be continually present to our
thoughts!) Be not high-minded, but fear: whatever our privileges,
whatever our experiences are, whatever our confidence may
be, let us dwell upon the thought; for there is no Christian upon
earth that hath not reason to fear, in proportion to the degree in
which he feels his thoughts towering on high, and grows into any
conceit of himself. Daily let us recollect what we were in our
natural estate; and what, with all our improvements and attain-
ments, we should immediately be, if God should forsake us.

Let us pray therefore that we may continue in God’s goodness;
and whoever may appear to fall from it, let us not glory; but
rather mourn over them, and pray for their recovery and salvation
to that God who is able to recover from the most obstinate inful-
delity and impudence, and to graft on not only foreign branches,
but what may seem yet more wonderful, those that have appeared
more than twice dead.

SECT. XXVI.

The apostle farther illustrates the future conversion of the Jews to
the gospel, and concludes the argument with observing, that in
the mean time, their obstinacy is over-ruled to such happy pur-
poses, as make the whole scene a most glorious display of the un-
searchable wisdom of God. Rom. XI. 25, to the end.

Romans XI. 25. A ND now, my brethren, upon the whole, I
will conclude what I have to say upon this interesting

Romans XI. 25. F OR I would not, brethren, that ye
should
And when that event is come, Israel shall be saved;

should be ignorant of this mystery, (lest ye should be wise in your own conceits;) that blindness in part is happened to Israel until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.


26 And so all Israel shall be saved; as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob.

27 For this is my covenant unto them, when

"Till the fulness of the Gentiles shall be brought in, &c.] it is well remarked by my late learned, pious and candid friend, Dr. William Harris, that as this epistle was written about the year 57, that is, long after the most remarkable conversion of the Jews, by the first preaching of the apostles, and after Paul had been about 30 years engaged in his work, it appears, that the prophecies relating to the calling of the Jews were not accomplished then, and consequently are not yet accomplished. Harris's Practical Discourses on the Messiah, p. 91. Dr. Whitby very justly observes, that there is a double harvest of the Gentiles spoken of by Paul, in this chapter; the first, called their riches, verse 12, as consisting in the preaching the gospel to all nations, whereby indeed they were happily enriched with Divine knowledge and grace; the second, the bringing in their fulness, which expresses a more glorious conversion of many to the true faith of Christians, in the latter age of the world, which is to be occasioned by the conversion of the Jews. Whit in loc. This answers Orchiu's objection, (Limb. Collat. p. 94.) that Paul's account is contrary to the prophecies of the Old Testament, which represent the recovery of the Gentile nations, as consequent on the redemption of Israel.

b As it is written, (Isa. lx. 20, &c.] This text, as it stands in the $L e x .$, seems different from the sense in which it is here quoted. A Deliverer shall come to those that turn from iniquity. But if Christ be here foretold as a Deliverer to the Jews, it is all that the apostle's purpose requires. Yet it is observable the $L A X$ agrees better with the words of the quotation, as it possibly might with the original reading; and it is certain, that the general tenor of God's covenant with Israel gave no hope of

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ed, And this [is] my covenant which I shall make with them when I shall take away their sins, that is, when their sins as a nation are remitted, it shall be to bring them again into covenant with myself. And thus, on the whole, with respect to the gospel [they are] indeed regarded as enemies for your sakes; that is, for their obstinate rejecting the gospel, God hath rejected them, in favour of you, and that he might receive you into his church as in their stead: but as for the election, that remnant of them which God hath graciously chosen to be subdued by the grace of the gospel, [they are] beloved for their fathers' sakes. God's gracious regard to the memory of their pious ancestors, engages him to take care that some of their seed shall always continue in covenant with him, till at length he recover them as a nation, and astonish the world with their unequall'd glory and felicity. And this shall most assuredly be, for the gifts and calling of God [are] not to be repented of: he doth not resume the gifts he hath once bestowed, nor retract the calls he hath once given, but will maintain a remembrance of them, and act in perfect harmony with them, in all his dispensations: according to that wise plan which he hath laid in his eternal counsels, and from which no unforeseen contingency can ever cause him to vary.

30 As then ye Gentiles were once, and for a long time, disobedient to God, and buried in ignorance and superstition, but now have obtained mercy, by means of their disobedience; God having taken you to be his people instead of the Jews; So they also, having been disobedient to the gospel, and the more prejudiced against it on occasion of your admittance to such distinguishing mercy, yet shall not be utterly and finally ruined, but shall also to the glory of Divine

of deliverance after rejection and chastisement, but in a way of repentance and reformation. Compare Lev. xxvi. 39—43; Deut. xxxv. 1—10.

[Footnotes to be repeated.] The most natural sense of these words, were they considered alone, might seem, that the calling the Gentiles prejudiced the Jews against the gospel; but as they generally rejected it before the Gentiles were called, 1, on the whole, prefer the sense given in the paraphrase. The different sense of Isa. were supposed, may seem a strong objection against it; but if the be rendered with a regard to, it may be applicable to both. [Footnote continued.]

28 As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes; but as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers' sakes.

29 For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance.

29 For as ye in times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their unbelief:

31 Even so have these also not now believed, that through your mercy they also may obtain mercy.
32 For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all.

33 O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!

34 For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor? 35 Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again?

36 For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen.

*Shut up all under disobedience, &c.* It is of great importance to observe, that this refers to different periods. First, God suffered the Gentiles, in the early ages of the world, to revolt, and then took the Abramite family as a peculiar seed to himself; and bestowed extraordinary favours upon them. Afterwards, he permitted them, by unbelief and disobedience, to fail, and took in the Gentiles on their believing; and he did even this, with an intent to make that very mercy to the Gentiles a means of provoking the Jews to Jealousy, and so bring them to faith, by that which had at first been an offence in the way to it. This was truly a mystery in the Divine conduct, which the apostle most rationally, as well as respectfully, adores; in the concluding words of the chapter.

6 Of him, through him, for him, &c.  Antiochus, speaking of nature, that is of God, has an expression, which one would imagine he had borrowed from this of Paul, ἐκ συμπαράκλησις, εἰς συμπαράκλησιν, εἰς συμπαράκλησιν, all things are of thee, in thee, and to thee.
xxvi. Let our whole souls be engaged to glorify this great and blessed God, from whom, and through whom, we, and all the creatures exist. O that it may be our eternal employment to render adoration, and blessing, and glory to him! To him, whose counsels none can trace: to him, who hath prevented us all with the blessings of his goodness; so that far from being able to confer any obligation on him, for which we should pretend to demand a recompense, on the contrary, we must own, that the more we are enabled and animated to do for him, the more indeed are we obliged to him. We cannot pretend to have known the mind of the Lord in all its extent, or to have been admitted into his secret counsels. He is continually doing marvellous things, which we know not: yet surely we know enough to admire and adore. We know enough to cry out in raptures of delightful surprise, O the depths of the riches, both of his wisdom and goodness!

One instance, though but one of many, we have here before us; in his mysterious conduct towards Jews and Gentiles; in which; occurrences that seem the most unaccountable, and indeed the most lamentable, are over-ruled by God to answer most benevolent purposes. That the sin of the Jews should be the salvation of the Gentiles, and yet the mercy shewn to the Gentiles in its consequences the salvation of the Jews, and so both should be concluded under sin, that God might more illustriously have mercy on both!

O that the blessed time were come, when all Israel shall be saved. When the Deliverer, who is long since come out of Sion, shall turn away iniquity from Jacob; and the fulness of the Gentiles come in, so that from the rising to the going down of the sun, the Lord shall be one, and his name one. Our faith waits the glorious event, and may perhaps wait it even to the end of life. But a generation to be born shall see it: for the gifts and callings of God are without repentance. Let our assured confidence in the Divine promise, travel on, as it were, to the accomplishment over mountains of difficulty, that may lie in our way; and let our hearts be cheered with this happy prospect, under all the grief which they feel, when we see how few now believe the report of the gospel, and to how few God hath revealed his arm.

While the glorious expected event is delayed, let us add our fervent intercessions with God, to these prayers, by which the church has in every age been endeavouring to hasten it on. They are all written in the book of God's remembrance, and shall all be reviewed and answered in their season. Let us in the mean time comfort.
comfort ourselves with this reviving thought, that the covenant which God will make with Israel in that day, is in the main the same he has made with us, to take away sin. Eased of such an insupportable burden, that would sink us into final ruin and despair, let us bear up cheerfully against all discouragements, and glory in the gospel which brings us this invaluable blessing: how long, and how generally soever, it may be, to the Jews a stumbling block, and the Greeks foolishness.

SECT. XXVII.

The apostle enters on a series of most admirable practical exhortations and directions; in which he labours to persuade Christians to act in a manner worthy of that gospel, the excellency of which he had been illustrating. And here, particularly, urges an entire consecration to God, and a care to glorify him, in their respective stations, by a faithful improvement of their various talents. Rom. XII. 1—11.

Romans XII. 1.

HAVING thus dispatched what I proposed in the argumentative part of the epistle, and suggested a variety of considerations, which may convince you of the great excellency of the gospel, and the singular favour which God has shewn to those Gentiles whom he hath called into the Christian church, and to that remnant of the Jews who are kept in so happy a relation to them, while the bulk of their nation are fallen into a state of rejection; let me now endeavour to animate you all to behave in a suitable manner. I intreat you therefore, my dear brethren, partakers with me in this holy calling, by all the tender mercies of our most compassionate God, that instead of the animal victims, whose slaughtered bodies you have been accustomed to offer, either to the true God, or to idols, you would now present, as it were, at his spiritual altar, your own bodies, as a living sacrifice, holy and well pleasing to God. Let all the

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Against conformity to the world, and against pride;

the members of your bodies, and all the faculties of your souls, being sanctified and animated by Divine grace, be employed in the service of him to whom you are under such immense obligations. This he requires of you, as your rational service; and it will be much more acceptable to him than any ceremonial forms though most exactly prescribed in a ritual of his own appointment. And as you desire to engage his approbation and favour, be not, in the general course of your temper and actions, conformed to the sentiments and customs of this vain and sinful world; but rather be ye transformed, in the renewing of your mind: endeavour to become new creatures, contracting new habits, and engaging in new pursuits, under the influence of the Divine Spirit on your hearts; that you may not only be speculatively acquainted with the doctrines, precepts, and design of the gospel, but may experimentally know that will of God, which is in itself so excellently good, and which, as it is most acceptable to him, has the most apparent tendency to purify and perfect our natures.

And I particularly say, and give it in charge, according to that grace which is given to me as an inspired apostle, to every one that is among you, as if personally named, to take the greatest heed, that he be not exalted into spiritual pride, by the gifts and privileges which God hath conferred upon you; I charge each not to arrogate [to himself] above what he ought to think, but that he think of himself with modesty, sobriety, and humility; according to the measure of that faith, and in correspondent proportion to those gifts, which God hath distributed to every man among

b Bodies and souls.] The body is here by a usual figure put for the whole person, nor can the soul be now presented to God otherwise than as dwelling in the body, or truly consecrated to him, unless the body be employed in his service; nor on the other hand, can the body be presented as a living sacrifice, otherwise than as acted and animated by the soul. For the propriety of the word μαρτυρίαν, which properly signifies, placing the victim before the altar; see Ellicott in loc.

c Good, acceptable, and perfect. J. Enfant explains each of these as opposed to the Jewish ritual; this Christian sacrifice being more excellent in itself, Ezek. xiv. 25, more pleasing to God, Psal. vi. 7, 8; and tending more to make us perfect, Heb. vii. 19; I understand it as referring to all the preceptive part of Christianity, the excellency of which they will best understand, who set themselves most exactly to practise upon it.


e Not to arrogate, &c.] Raphaelius, Annot. ex Herodot. in loc. has shown, that μαρτυρία has properly this signification.

f According
For they, though many, are one body in Christ.

4 For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office:
5 So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.

6 Having then gifts, differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith:

7 Or ministry, let us wait on our ministering: or he that teacheth, on teaching;

8 Or he that exhorteth,

Among you. And surely when you consider it is God who hath given all, there will appear little reason to magnify yourselves on any distinguishing share of his bounty, which any one may have received. Especially, when you remember, that this distribution is made, not only, or chiefly, for your own sake, but out of regard to the good of the whole: For as in one body we have many members, but all the members have not the same use, but each its proper function and service, appointed by the wise Former, and gracious Preserver of the whole; So we, though many, are one body in Christ, and every one members of each other: we should therefore endeavour each of us to know his own place and condition, and mutually to make our various capacities as serviceable as we can.

Having therefore gifts, all proceeding from God the great fountain of every good thing, and different according to the diversity of the grace that is given unto us;' whether [it be] prophecy, as enabling us to foretell future events, or to make discourses for the edification and direction of the church, let us be employed in it [according to the degree of our gift, which is in proportion to the degree of faith, that is respectively in us]: Or [having] the office of ministry, as deacons, let a man employ himself actively and faithfully in his ministration: or if he be an instructor of catechumens, who are to be fitted for the communion of the church, let him continue humbly, tenderly and patiently, in the work of teaching: Or if he be an exhorter, whose peculiar business it is to urge Christians

[According to the proportion of faith.] Many interpret this, "Do it according to the general scheme of Divine revelation, not setting up any novel interpretations of scripture, injurious to it." But Hodge (Annot. ex Xen. in loc.) objects that 'not prophecy, would be the proper word to express that. Dr. Sam. Clarke, (Posthum. Serm. Vol. 1. p. 6.) by faith understands the trust reposed in them, or the nature and use of the gift they had; which is a very unusual sense of the word προφητεία. The Rhenish Jews suppose, it was a confession, or summary of faith, drawn up by all the apostles in conjunction: to which they refer, Rom. vi. 17; chap. xvi. 17; 1 Tim. vi. 30; Gal. i. 6; Acts xv. 6; none of which texts seem to imply any thing like it; nor is it pretended that such a creed was quoted in antiquity, by the name of ἀρχαία προφητεία, or indeed that I can find, by any other. If we suppose the prophetic gift to be given in proportion to the exercise of faith, that is, of dependence on God, when he signified a disposition in general to impart it, we have I think the clearest explication the phrase will admit. See Vol. ii. p. 184, note b on Mark xi. 22.

[Employ himself to ministration.] It seems the word προφητεία is understood. Compare 1 Pet. iv. 10, 11.—The word διακονέω properly signifies the ministration of the deacon, and so interpreted gives the distinctest sense.
Christians to duty, or to comfort them in the discharge of it, let him continue in his exhortation: be that giveth any thing to a charitable use, [let him do it] with true simplicity, and unforeigned liberality of heart; neither seeking the applause of men, nor any other sinister end which he could desire to conceal: be that presideth in the distribution of charities so collected, let him do it with diligence; that he may know the case proposed, and that he may see that nothing be wanting to make the charity as effectual as possible; and as for him that sheweth mercy, that is, who has the care of those who on account of peculiarly grievous calamities are the objects of particular compassion, let him do it with an obliging cheerfulness of temper, cautiously guarding against any disgust at what may seem mean and disagreeable in the offices which must necessarily be performed for such.

9 On the whole, [let] love [be] undissembled, and all your expressions of mutual friendship as free as possible from base flattery, and from vain compliment. Abhor that which is evil, in every instance, and adhere resolutely to that which is good. Practise benevolence in all its branches, and every other virtue, with the greatest determination and perseverance of mind; whatever discouragements may for the present arise. Do not only abound in the exercises of common humanity; but in brotherly love, as christians, [be] mutually full of tender affection; yea, cultivate those gentle dispositions of mind with delight; and endeavour to think so modestly of yourselves, that you may still be in honour preferring one another. Let each in his turn, be ready to think better of his brethren than of himself; and so to prevent them in every office of respect, and out of regard to their advantage.

b He that presideth with diligence.] In this and the following clause, I follow the interpretation of Lord Boring on, (Misc. Sacra, Vol. I. p. 77—80,) and refer to him for the reasons which I think sufficient to justify it; only mentioning the application of the word προείδω, in the same sense to Phile, Rom. xvi. 2, who could not be supposed a ruler in the church. προείδω, properly signifies one who presideth, but in what the connection must determine. For the extraordinary mercy exercised among the ancient christians, see Luchan de Monte Penybom, and Opera, Vol. II. p. 764. Edist. Salmar. 1613, and Justin Epist. xlix. 1 In brotherly love, [be] mutually full of tender affection.] Perhaps the extremely expressive words of the original, συναγαπημεν, might justly be rendered, delight in the tenderest fraternal affection to each other. The word αγαπημεν is not only signifying a strong affection, like that of parent animals to their offspring, but a delight in it, as the ingenious Dr. Bulleyn has justly observed in his excellent sermon on this text. 1 Preventing them in every office of respect.
11 Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord;

tage, to give up with as good a grace as possible any thing in which his own honour or personal interest may be concerned. When you are actually engaged, be not slothful and sluggish in the prosecution of your proper business in life, but endeavour to rouse your spirits; so that it may be dispatched with vigour and alacrity, and without an unnecessary expence of time. For this purpose be fervent, warm and active in spirit: and certainly you will see the greatest obligation and encouragement to be so, when you consider that you are serving the Lord Jesus Christ, to whose condescension and love you are infinitely indebted. May you always attend his service with the greatest zeal and delight, and may every action of life be brought into a due subordination to that great end!

IMPROVEMENT.

How rich were a christian in practical directions for the conduct of life, even if this excellent chapter were his only treasure of this kind. Let such scriptures as these be welcome to us; the scriptures that teach us our duty, as well as those that display before our eyes the richest variety of spiritual privileges. Indeed it is one of our greatest privileges, to be taught our duty, if at the same time we are inclined by Divine grace to perform it, and if we are not, we have no privileges that will prevent, none that will not encrease our ruin.

v. self does the great apostle lay the foundation of all virtue in a principle of unfeigned piety towards God: in presenting before him our bodies as living sacrifices. How great an honour and happiness will it be to us, to do it.—That we may be engaged to this

respect.] Archbishop Leighton well observes, (Expository Works, Vol. II. p. 429) that the original words, τῇ πίστει αλληλον, are very expressive, and might literally be rendered, loving one another with respect, or in giving honour going before each other. This I have endeavoured to express in this clause of the paraphrase, but have retained our version as expressing something of the esteem from which this respectful behaviour should proceed. L’Enfant renders it mutuallly prevent one another with honour.

1a Servin the Lord.] Several copies for χρήμα read χρήσα, serving the time, that is, husbanding your opportunities; and Dr. Mill, trusting chiefly to the authority of Jerome, and some other Latin translations, admits this as the true reading. But it is by no means supported by an adequate number of Greek manuscripts; and besides, that it would be an unnatural and inelegant expression in that sense, it sinks the noble sense of the commonly received reading so much, that I could by no means persuade myself to follow it. It is a lively exhortation to Christians to be always serving Christ, and to cultivate the temper which the apostle expresses, when he says ποιησάμενοι τὸν Χριστὸν, Phil. i. 8, to me to live is Christ. It also suggests a motive to enforce the former exhortation; as I have hinted in the paraphrase.
this, let us often think of his tender mercies, so many and so great; and especially of that most illustrious of all mercies, his redeeming us by the blood of his Son, and calling us into the Christian covenant. Can there be a more reasonable service than this? that we should be consecrated to our Creator, to our Redeemer, to our Sanctifier, to our constant Benefactor, to our supreme end and happiness?—The world indeed neglects him, yea, even what is called the Christian world, neglects him, to such a degree, as if we did not continually see it, we should not suppose to be possible. But let us not in this instance be conformed to it. O that Divine grace may so transform and renew our hearts, that we may not! 2 Nothing but experience can teach us, how good, and perfect, and acceptable, the will of God is, and how happy a thing it is to be governed, in every respect, by its unerring declarations.

Let us remember, that as our sanctification, as also our humility and our usefulness are his will; and therefore let us endeavour to conquer every high conceit of ourselves, and every sordid and selfish sentiment. Let us often reflect, that we are all members of each other; and being so happily united in Christ, have all but one interest, which is that of the body, and of its glorified head. Whether our station in the church be more public, or private; whether our capacities and endowments be more or less distinguished; let us all be faithful, be affectionate, be disinterested, be active, endeavouring to serve Christ, and even the poorest of his people, with simplicity, with diligence, with cheerfulness; preferring others to ourselves; abhorring that love which is spent in hypocritical words and unmeaning forms; cultivating that which gives to the soul tenderness, condescension, and vigour. In one word, let us remember we are serving the Lord, the Lord Christ; and doing all in his name, and for his sake, let us add fervour to our spirit, zeal to our diligence, and abasement to our humility, for nothing surely can be so animating, nothing so melting, nothing so humbling, as to recollect, on the one hand, how much we owe him, and on the other, how little we are able, how much less we are careful to do for his service.

SECT. XXVIII.

The apostle pursues his practical exhortations, and particularly recommends devotion, patience, hospitality, mutual sympathy, humility, a peaceful temper, and a readiness to forgive injuries. Rom. XII. 12, to the end.

Romans XII. 12.

I HAVE been exhorting you, my brethren, to many Christian duties and graces, and among the
tribulation, continuing instant in prayer; the rest, to the greatest activity and zeal in the service of Christ. Let me exhort you to guard against such a dejection of spirits as would enervate that holy activity and zeal. On the contrary, [he] you, that are the servants of Christ, always rejoicing in the hope of those glorious rewards which your Divine Master, in the riches of his grace, hath set before you; and in that support which he gives you in the way to that eternal glory. And animated by that hope, be patient in all the tribulation which you may bear in his cause, or from his hands in the wise disposals of his gracious Providence. And while under these pressures, continuing instant in prayer, draw down those necessary supplies of his holy Spirit which may carry you honourably through all your trials; Liberally communicating to the necessities of the saints, and accounting nothing your own which their relief requires you to furnish out: particularly pursuing that hospitality which present circumstances so peculiarly demand, especially towards those strangers that are exiles, or travellers in the cause of Christianity. Stay not till occasions of this kind force themselves upon you and much less, till importunity extort the favour, as it were, against your will; but, like Abraham, look out for proper objects of such a bounty; and follow after them, to bring them back to your houses. On the other hand, bless them who are pursuing you with evil intentions, and persecute you with the greatest severity for conscience sake. Wish them well, and pray for their conversion; yea, if they should go on to revile you, for all the expressions of your love, go on to bless; and curse them not, though provoked by their bitterest imprecations against you. Make it a constant maxim with yourself, to maintain a constant sympathy with your brethren of mankind, which may lead you to rejoice with them that rejoice, and to weep with them that weep: to congratulate others on their felicity,

*Pursuing hospitality.* It was the more proper for the apostle so frequently to enforce this duty, as the want of public inns (much less common, than among us; though not quite unknown, Luke x. 34, 35,) rendered it difficult for strangers to get accommodations, and as many Christians might be banished their native country for religion, and perhaps laid under a kind of ban of excommunication, both among Jews and heathens, which would make it a high crime, for any of their former brethren, to receive them into their houses.—For the illustration which the paraphrase gives of the energy of this text, I am obliged to Mr. Blackwell, Sacred Class. Vol. I. p. 222.
felicity, and to bear your part with them in their sorrows, as members of one body, who have all, as it were, one common feeling. \[Be\] entirely united in your regards for each other. Let each condescend to the rest, and agree with them, as far as he fairly and honourably can: and where you must differ, do not, by any means, quarrel about it, but allow the same liberty of sentiments you would claim. Affect not high things; either to possess exalted stations of life, or to converse with those that bear them; but rather condescend, and accommodate yourselves to men of low rank; for it is chiefly among the poorer part of mankind that the gospel is like to prevail: and all christians ought, in this respect, to bear the image of their great Master, who spent most of his time in conversing with such. Be not so wise in your own conceit, as to think yourselves above the Divine direction, or that of your fellow christians, in this respect, or in any other. Render to none evil for evil; nor imagine that any man's injurious treatment of you will warrant your returning the injury; but act in such a cautious and circumspect manner, that it may evidently appear you provide against the malignity which will lead many to put the worst constructions upon your actions. And do only those things which may be above the need of excuse, and may appear, at the first view, fair, and reputable in the sight of all men. If it be possible, and at least to the utmost of your power, as far as it is consistent with duty, honour, and conscience, live peaceably with all men; not only your own countrymen, or fellow christians, but Jews and Gentiles, Greeks and Barbarians.  

Upon the whole, my dearly beloved brethren, whatever wrongs you may receive, revenge not yourselves on those that have injured you; but rather yield, and give place to the wrath of the enemy;
enemy; for God hath forbidden us to indulge any of the vindictive passions: as it is written, (Deut. xxxii. 35,) Vengeance [is] mine, that is it properly belongs to me, and I will recompense the deserved punishment, saith the Lord. And indeed it requires the wisdom, as well as the dignity and majesty, of a God, to claim, and manage it right. Therefore, instead of bearing any thoughts of hurting them that have used you most unkindly and unjustly, if thine enemy hunger, feed him; and if he thirst, give him drink; and on the whole, do him all the good in thy power, as Solomon urgeth, (Prov. xxv. 21;) for by doing this thou shalt, as it were, heap coals of fire on his head: thou wilt touch him so sensibly, that he will no more be able to stand against such a conduct, than to bear on his head burning coals; but will rather submit to seek thy friendship, and endeavour by future kindness to overbalance the injury.

On all occasions, act on this as an inviolable maxim; and if you do not find the immediate good effect, persist in such a conduct; be not overcome with evil; where it seems most obstinate, but overcome evil with good; for that is the most glorious victory, and a victory which may certainly be obtained, if you will have the courage to adhere to that, which, being good, is always in its own nature, on the whole, invincible, to whatever present disadvantage it may seem obnoxious.

IMPROVEMENT.

SURELY if any thing consistent with the burdens and sorrows of mortal life can inspire constant joy, it must be the Christian hope; the hope of our calling. Surely with a joy thus supported, no tribulation can be too great to be endured with patience; yea, with
All are to be subject to the superior authorities;

with cheerfulness; since whatever it be, the glorious Object of our hope, far from being endangered or diminished by it, shall rather be secured and increased. Let us therefore continue instant in prayer, that our minds may be so fortified and ennobled that we may dwell upon these views.

Well may they keep the heart in so serene and pleasant a state, as to make us ready to every act of kindness to our fellow-creatures; but especially to those who are heirs with us of this hope; Ver. whom we ought to esteem it our great honour and privilege to be able in any measure to assist and accommodative, while they are travelling through this too often inhospitable wilderness, in the way to that kingdom they are going to receive. It is no wonder, that as we are not of this world, but are chosen and called out of the world to so glorious a prospect, the world should hate and persecute us: but let us neither be dismayed, nor in any degree exasperated, with the ill usage we may meet with. Rather, with unfeigned compassion and good-will to the most injurious of our enemies, let us not only refrain from repaying evil with evil, but render them blessing for curses, and benefits for wrongs: since we have ourselves found such mercy, and are called to inherit such a blessing.

15 Let us cultivate those kind and social affections which this great proficience in them all so forcibly inculcates;—that tender sympathy which may teach us to share in the joys and sorrows of all about us,—that candid humility, which shall, with graceful and unaffected freedom, stoop to the lowest and meanest, and while it stoops, rise in unsought honours,—that distrust of ourselves, which shall cause us to cease from our own wisdom, that we may repose ourselves upon the unerring guidance of our heavenly Father,—that kindly obstinate attachment to peace, that heroic superiority, which melts down with kindness the heart that but a little before was glowing with rage. And on the whole, that resolute perseverance in goodness, which must be finally victorious, and will assuredly rise with a new accession of strength and glory, from every seeming defect.

SECT. XXIX.

The Apostle urges obedience to magistrates, justice in all its branches, and love, as the fulfilling of the law: concluding the chapter with a warm exhortation to that universal sanctity which might become and adorn, the excellent dispensation of the gospel Rom. XIII. 1, to the end.

ROMANS XIII. 1.

Among the many exhortations I am now giving you, my Christian brethren, to a life worthy
2 Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive
nation, not only from the civil powers they injure, but from the supreme Sovereign, whose laws they break, and whose order they endeavour to reverse.

3 And indeed the good purposes to which magistracy is subservient, make it very apparent, that God must be displeased when that is despised: for rulers, in their several offices, are not on the whole a terror to good works, but to such as are evil; being intended to encourage the former, by punishing the latter. Wouldst thou not therefore be afraid of the high authority with which they are invested? Do that which is good, and thou shalt, according to the general course of administration, have not only protection, but praise and respect from it. This, I say, may reasonably be expected, and will be the case, where the magistrate understands himself and his office: for he is, according to the original appointment, to be considered as elevated above his fellow-men, not for his own indulgence, dominion, and advantage, but that he might be to thee, and to all the rest of his subjects, as the servant and instrument of God, for thine and the public good. But if thou dost that which is evil, and so makest thyself the enemy of that society of which he is the guardian, thou hast indeed reason to be afraid: for he holdeth not the sword of justice, which God hath put into his hand, in vain. It was given him for this very purpose, that he might inflict damnation.

4 For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same;
be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil.

5 Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake.

6 For, for this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing.

7 Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due, custom to whom custom is due; and this because of the ordinance of God, that by exacting capital punishment, which to deny is subverting the chief use of magistracy.

5 Tribute to whom tribute.] It is well known that the Jews had a favourite notion among them, that they, as the peculiar people of God, were exempted from obligation to pay tribute to Gentiles; (Joseph. Antiq. lib. xviii. cap. 1; Bell. Jud. lib. ii. cap. 1, § 2, § 8; cap. 5, (al. 7,) § 1;) against which this passage is directly leveled, though without pointing them out in any invidious manner.

6 See note on vers.”}

subverting the chief use of magistracy.

5, 6, 7. See note on vers. 1.
whom reverence is due, on account of their worth and character, render reverence; and to whom any external form of civil honour and respect is due, by virtue of their office and rank of life, though it should so happen that they have no peculiar merit to recommend them to your regard, scruple not to pay all proper marks of honour; and guard against that stiffness, which, under pretence of Christian simplicity, by disputing such common forms, may rather indulge pride, and occasion reproach. On the whole, owe nothing to any, but endeavour to manage your affairs with that economy and prudent attention, that you may as soon as possible balance accounts with all who have demands upon you, except it be with respect to that debt, which, while you pay, you will be renewing: I mean, the obligation you will ever be under to love one another. That I would recommend to your constant care; for he that loveth another, hath in a compendious manner fulfilled every thing that the law requireth with respect to him. For that [precept, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour, Thou shalt not covet any thing that is thy neighbour's, and any other command respecting our fellow-creatures, if such [there be] is summed up in this one excellent and comprehensive precept, which I wish may be engraven on all our hearts, so as to regulate every affection and action; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Thou shalt learn to put thyself, as it were, in his place, and to act as, in a supposed change of circumstances, thou coudest reasonably desire to be treated. Now it is very obvious, that love worketh no evil to one's neighbour; nay, wherever that noble principle governs, it will put men upon doing all they can, to ward off injury from one another, and to make the life of each as comfortable and happy as possible: therefore it may well be said, as it is asserted above, that love [is] the accomplishment of the whole law.

All social duty summed up in the love of our neighbour.

8 Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another, hath fulfilled the law.

9 For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

10 Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.

11 And let me urge you to attend to this, and to the other precepts I have given, with so much the greater disposition, as tua, honour, expresses the conduct and external behaviour, proceeding from it.
greater diligence, knowing the circumstances of the present season; which, if you consider, you will see that it is high time now to awake out of sleep, and vigorously to improve every opportunity of doing good, and prosecuting the great business of life, which is to secure the Divine favour, and your final happiness: for our great expected salvation is now considerably nearer than when we at first believed. We have complete salvation in view, it is continually advancing upon us, flying forwards, as it were, on the swiftest wings of time; and that which remains, interposed between the present moment, and our entering on the promised reward, is, comparatively but a very small span. Act 12 therefore at all times, in a holy subordination to such a circumstance! And since the night is far advanced, since the dark state of the present life, in which we often confound good and bad, is almost over, and the day is drawing near, even that day which will shew every thing in its proper colours and forms; let us therefore put off the works, which suit only a state of darkness, and let us put on the complete armour of light. Let us be clothed with all the Christian graces, which like burnished and beautiful armour, will be at once an ornament and defence, and which will reflect the bright beams that are so gloriously rising upon us. And as [being] now 13 in the clear and open day, let us take care to walk decently, honourably, and gracefully; since the lustre, already shining about us, requires great reformation and exemplary holiness: not in rioting and drunken debauches, not in chambering, effeminacy, and lasciviousness; the vices in which so many are wasting and polluting the hours which nature has destined to necessary hour at night, is nearly equivalent to the addition of ten years to a man's life, of which, (supposing the 2 hours in question to be so spent,) 8 hours every day should be employed in study and devotion.

1 Let us walk honourably and gracefully.] So τα καλά exactly signifies. Dr. Miller renders it, let us walk with grace. Failing Flowers of Life, p. 38.

2 Chambering: καμάλια. This Leigh explains of lying long in bed. I will not defend that sense of the word; but I will here record the observation which I have found of great use to myself, and to which I may say, that the production of this work, and most of my other writings, is owing; viz. that the difference between rising at 5, and 7 of the clock in the morning, for the space of forty years, supposing a man to go to bed at the same
neccessary repose: not in the contention and emulation which the indulgence of such irregular desires often occasion. But laying aside all these abominations and enormities, let us put on the Lord Jesus Christ, our great Sovereign and Saviour. Endeavour, my brethren, to obtain the greatest conformity to his temper, and to appear as like him as possible, in every particular in which he can be the object of our imitation; for that short precept will contain all that is necessary to adorn our profession to its greatest height. And while so many are spending their time, and thoughts, and substance, in those low pursuits which regard only the meaner part of their nature: make not a solicitous provision for the flesh, to [fulfil its] irregular desires, nor be intent in pleasing any of the senses, even where their demands may not appear directly criminal; but labour to preserve the superiority of the immortal spirit, and to keep it continually under the discipline of so holy, and so noble a religion.

IMPROVEMENT.

While subjects learn reverence and obedience to their magistrates, not only for wrath, but for conscience sake, may magistrates learn a correspondent care to answer that end of their office, which the apostle makes the foundation of such precepts as these, and to be indeed the ministers of God for good, a terror not to good but to evil works.

Great Britain, while I write this*, is happy in a government to which this character may justly be applied. Its subjects are under the greatest obligations to the Divine goodness, in having so remarkably overthrown the attempts of those who would have left us little use of the scripture; but would themselves have abused it, to have riveted on the heaviest fetters, by perverting this passage of St. Paul, as if he had intended to subvert every free constitution under heaven, and to put a sword into the hand

* Anno Domini, 1749.
hand of merciless tyrants, to kill and take possession of the heritage of the Lord, counting his people but as sheep for the slaughter.

While we are thus happy, we shall be doubly inexcusable, if we fail in rendering both honour and tribute, where they are so 7 justly due.

May we extend our care to the universal law of love, and may 8—10 it be so deeply engraven on our hearts, that the practice of every social virtue may become easy and delightful.

And on the whole, being animated by the approach of salvation, 11 12 may we awake to the vigorous discharge of our duty, and while the light of the gospel scatters about us so bright a ray, may we walk, in every respect, worthy of it, that we may have no reason to wish for the veil of darkness to cover our shame. May we not 13 only abstain from the vices, which are here branded with the infamy they deserve; but distinguish ourselves in cultivating the contrary virtues. And that we may do it effectually, may we put on the Lord Jesus Christ, remembering continually the obligations we are under to consider his life as the model of our own. So shall we make the gospel day yet brighter in the eyes of all around us, and anticipate, while we are here in this world of comparative darkness, the lustre, with which we hope, through his influence and grace, to shine forth in the celestial kingdom of our Father.

SECT. XXX.

The apostle recommends mutual candour: especially between those christians who did, and those who did not, think themselves obliged in conscience to observe the ceremonies enjoined by Moses; and strenuously attempts to turn their zeal for, or against, those observances, into a concern to prepare for their final appearance before the great tribunal. Rom. XIV. 1—12.

Romans XIV. 1. I KNOW there are different opinions among you christians at Rome, with regard to the obligations of the Mosaic ritual. Now here, I would be solicitous to suggest the most peaceful councils, and to persuade you to mutual forbearance, and mutual love. As for him that is so weak in the christian faith, as still to retain the prejudices of a Jewish education on this head, let me prevail on you, Gentile believers, in this respect better instructed in the nature and extent of christian liberty, to receive and converse with him, in a friendly and respectful manner:
Concerning the distinction of meats and days.

and do not indulge yourselves in the inclination which you may sometimes find, to run into debates and distinctions about matters in doubt between you. For one, that is, the converted Gentile, believeth very truly and rightly, that he may eat all things indifferently that are good for food; but another, who is in this respect weak, eateth nothing but herbs, and other vegetables, to express his humility and self-denial, and to guard against the pollution that might attend even the use of clean animals for food, if they are not killed and prepared after the Jewish manner. Now in this diversity of opinion and practice, exercise candour and forbearance to each other, and all will be well. Let not him that eateth all kinds of flesh freely, despise and set at nought him that eateth not those prohibited or suspicious things, as if he were a weak and superstitious bigot: and let not him that eateth them not, but conscientiously abstains from them, judge and condemn him that eateth them, as a profane, unclean, and intemperate person. For God hath received him into the number of his children and people, without laying him under such restraints; and surely where God receives, we should not presume to reject.

Let me ask thee seriously on this occasion, whoever thou mayest be, and how wise and holy.

2 For one believeth that he may eat all things: another, who is weak, eateth herbs.

3 Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not, judge him that eateth: for God hath received him.

4 Who art thou that judgest another man's servant?

a Debates, and distinctions, about matters, in doubt.] Dr. Whitby explains congregations of dissimulating persons according to their inward thoughts and reasonings on these heads. The force of the apostle's admirable reasoning in favour of candour, and mutual condescension, cannot be evaded by saying, as some have unhappily done, that here was no separation between Jewish and Gentile Christians. Had the things judged indifferent by the latter, and apprehended sinful by the former, been imposed, a separation of communion must have ensued, and the schism on the apostle's principles would have been chargeable on the imposers. When it shall please God to awaken in the governors of established Protestant churches, such a spirit of moderation and goodwill, joined with a true zeal for religion, as to leave such things in that natural state of indifference, in which almost all sensible men confess it to be best they should be left; many separations will cease of course, and the healers of such breaches will do a noble service to their country, he honoured by all that love Christianity, and amply regarded by the great Head of the church.

b Eateth herbs.] Dr. Whitby demonstrates, by many learned quotations here, that some of the Jews used to eat no flesh at all, and others looked upon it as a very high pitch of virtue, to abstain from it in Gentile countries, and to subsist entirely on vegetables; because they did not know, but any flesh sold in the shambles might have been offered to idols, or at least contracted some other ceremonial pollution. Mr. Baxter thinks here is a reference to such Christians as might have been Pythagoreans before their conversion, and might retain their old prejudices against animal food, Baxter's Works, Vol. IV. p. 644. But as that aversion to animal food depended on their doctrine of the transmigration of souls, which no Christian could retain, I think, that interpretation is much preferable, which refers it to Jewish converts, who were also much more numerous in the church, and possibly might some of them come from the Essenes, a Jewish sect peculiarly strict on this head so that they abstained, not only from flesh, but from fruit.

c God
servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: For God is able to make him stand.

5 One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind.

6 He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks: and he that eateth not, to the Lord he giveth thanks; who giveth God thanks. Whoso eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks: and he that eateth not, to the Lord he giveth thanks. Who giveth God thanks.

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Every one to be persuaded in his own mind,

sect. xxx.

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God is able to establish him.] Dr. Whitby explains this of God's convincing the Jewish convert in general, of the indifferency of the Mosiac ritual, by putting a speedy period to the very possibility of observing it in the destruction of the temple at Jerusalem; which would have a peculiar efficacy to wean men's minds from an attachment to it, when considered in connection with Christ's predictions of that event. But I choose the more extensive interpretation, as more obvious, and less liable to objection.

Estemeth one day above another.] Raphelius here produces some apposite passages to shew that xwsw in such a construction signifies to prefer.

Let every man freely enjoy his own sentiment.] Critics have observed that the word xwsw is most properly applied to a ship, which is carried on by the wind and tide, with all its sails spread, to forward it, and nothing to obstruct it; and so the meaning is, let him go on in his own way, without impediment. How strong a text this is for the right of private judgment, I need take no pains to show: but the reader may see it vindicated from the censures of a very celebrated writer, in Mr. Bennet's Appendix to his Lexicon, p. 120—124.
be done to those Mosaic institutions: and on
the other hand, he that regards not a day, it is
to the Lord, we hope, that he doth not regard [it]
it is because he thinks Christ will be honoured,
by asserting the liberty of his followers in this
respect. He that eateth freely of whatever
comes before him, eateth to the Lord, endeavours
to glorify him for it, as becomes a good christian
and giveth God thanks for the various provision
of his liberal providence; and he that eateth not
the food which the law forbids, may act on the
same pious principles, and we ought charitably
to conclude, that it is out of a regard to what he
apprehends the will of the Lord, that he eateth
it not; he cheerfully denies himself what he
supposes Christ would have him forbear; and
he likewise giveth God thanks that other food is
provided on which he may conveniently subsist,
and that he is not forced to eat what he thinks
unclean, out of absolute necessity. Now where
is the damage of all this, and while such a reli-
gious temper towards God prevails, how little
does it comparatively signify, whether it acts
by the use of these things, or by a conscien-
tious abstinence from them?

It may well be supposed that this a just re-
presentation of the case: for it is certainly what
every christian is obliged to, by virtue of our
common profession; as none of us, who under-
stands and answers that engagement, liveth to
himself; and none of us, so far as the circum-
stances of his death are under the direction of
his own choice, dieth to himself, nor determines
the most important affairs by his own humour,
or present interest. But from the time of our
giving up our names to Christ, as our Divine
Master, to the last day and hour of our continu-
ance in life, if we live, it is our concern that
we may live to the Lord, and strenuously pursue
the great purposes of his glory; or that if we
die, we may die unto the Lord, either by sacri-
ficing our lives to his gospel, if he demands it
of us; or, if we expire in a natural way, by be-
having to the last, as those who have his love
ruling in our hearts, and his sacred cause still
in our eye: so that whether we live or die, we
are the Lord’s; in consequence of being thus
faithfully devoted to Christ, both in life and
death, we have the pleasure to think, that living
or dying, we are the objects of his care and fa-
tour.

7 For none of us
liveth to himself, and
no man dieth to him-
self.

8 For whether we
live, we live unto the
Lord; and whether we
die, we die unto the
Lord: whether we
live therefore, or die,
we are the Lord’s.
For we must all stand before the tribunal of Christ.

9 For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living.

10 But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ.

11 For it is written, As I live saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God.

12 So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.
IMPROVEMENT.

SECT. 33.

Let all the different sects and parties of Christians study to imbibe more of the equitable and lovely temper which the apostle here expresses in so genuine a manner. The divisions of the church are not to be healed by imposing our own sentiments, phrases, and forms, and censuring and harassing those that will not acquiesce in them. Such a temper will only engender strife, and mutual provocations will produce mutual increasing resentment.

Let us receive our weaker brethren with tenderness and respect; not despising those who scruple what we practise, not judging those who practise what we scruple. God may receive the one and the other: yea, the different practices of both may proceed from the same general principles, a desire to please him, and to approve ourselves in his sight.

In this we may all unite, in a concern that we may not live, or die to ourselves, but to Christ. His dying love, his living care may surely challenge this. Worthy is he who died, and rose again, and revived, to be adored and obeyed, as the Lord, both of the dead and of the living. And such, in one view or another, he will finally appear. We shall know it in that day when we shall be called before his judgment-seat. Conscious of so many crimes, and, even in our best days, of so many imperfections, how shall we dare to appear before him; especially, if we should then receive judgment without mercy. Let us not tempt it, to our own everlasting confusion, by shewing no mercy.

Let us not add, to all the offences which may justly cause us to tremble before his tribunal, the criminal arrogance of usurping the place and prerogative of our Judge. Let us remember our relation to him, and to each other, and act in a manner becoming it.

Let us diligently judge ourselves as those who must be judged of the Lord; so thinking of that grand account, as with an increasing solicitude to prepare for it. The Lord grant that we may find mercy of the Lord in that day! The Lord grant that it may also be imparted to many of our brethren, who have differed most from us; yea, and through the indulgence of our compassionate Saviour, to many who have been prone to censure and condemn us for those things which he knows we have done from a desire to please him, or refused to do from a fear of offending him!
Romans XIV. 13.

Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumbling-block, or an occasion to fall in his brother’s way.

14 I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself: but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean.

Romans XIV. 13.

I have just been reminding you of your appearance before the tribunal of Christ, and the account which every man must render of himself there: and now give me leave a little farther to pursue the consequence which so naturally follows. Let us not therefore any longer judge another, but rather judge ye, and determine this, as matter of undoubted and important duty, not to lay any stumbling block or scandal before a brother: to do nothing, how indifferent soever it may be in itself, which may tend to prejudice, discourage, or mislead any other Christian.

I know, for instance, and am at length persuaded, by the powerful teaching of the Lord Jesus Christ, though it be so contrary to the principles I imbibed in my education, and so strenuously maintained in my Pharisaical state, that nothing is unclean of itself: that there is no moral turpitude, in any kind of food, by which the human body may be nourished; but that, separate from particular circumstances which may arise, it may lawfully be eaten; there is nothing, I say, unclean, unless it be to him that in his conscience accounteth any thing to be unclean: and to him, while he retaineth that opinion, it is indeed unclean, how indifferent soever it is in itself; and he will contract guilt before God, by allowing himself in it, whether it be to indulge his own taste, or to engage the favours of others, whilst he hath this inward apprehension.

* Let us not therefore any longer judge one another. It is very plain that the word ἐγνώκατε, is here used in two very different senses, as Raphelius on this text shows. καθιστάμενος is used, in the same sentence, by Herodotus.

b. A stumbling-block. Some say that ὁ ἐνέματος, properly signifies "a piece of wood that supports a trap, which falls, on its being moved," and so may with peculiar propriety signify whatever may be the occasion of ensnaring another, and drawing him into sin and mischief.

c If
But to pursue the things that make for peace.

Rom. XIV. 15. apprehension of its being unlawful. But if there should not be such an apprehension concerning the thing in itself considered, yet it may be in effect prohibited to thee, as injurious to others; for if thy brother be grieved, wounded, and led into sin, by [thy] use of meat how dost thou any longer walk according to that noble principle of love which I have just now been so earnestly recommending? How innocent soever it may in itself seem, O do not, if thou hast any bowels for him, or any regard for thy great Master, destroy him by thy rash and unkind use of such particular meat, for whom Christ, not only submitted to smaller instances of self-denial, but died in the agonies of the cross. Is a morsel of meat indeed, so great a thing to a Christian, that for the sake of it an immortal soul should be endangered, and the blood of a Redeemer injured? Let not then your liberty, which is in itself good, be slandered and blamed, for being the occasion of so much mischief, as such an ill use of it may probably produce. And surely none of you can pretend to object any thing from conscience, against abstaining from these things. For the kingdom of God, into which we are entered by believing in Christ, and becoming his subjects, consists not in meat and drink; it neither prohibits nor enjoins such things as these, nor is taken up with such little matters; but the great design of it is to regulate the temper of its professors, and in the most effectual manner to cultivate and promote righteousness and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost, that is, a cheerful temper, supported by a consciousness of strict integrity, established on principles of universal love, and inspired by the blessed Spirit of God. And he that in these things faithfully serveth Christ, and acts upon the great maxims of his religion, is acceptable to God, whether he abstains from the liberties in question, or allows himself in them: and he will also be in the main approved by men too; for bad as the world is, upright and benevolent men, who put on no affected rigour and severities in religion, 15 But if thy brother be grieved with thy meat, now wilt thou not do so. Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died.

16 Let not then your good be evil spoken of:

17 For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

18 For he that in these things serveth Christ, is acceptable to God, and approved of men.

\[c\] If thy brother be grieved. Hence it appears, that grieving a person does not signify merely putting him out of humour, but lead him into sin. The grief therefore is that which arises from a consciousness of having acted amiss, in conformity to the example of a person, considered as superior, whether in rank or genius, knowledge or piety.

\[d\] A cheerful temper. &c.] This is the interpretation which Dr. Scott has given, in his Christian Life, Vol. 1. p. 285; and I think, on the whole, preferable to any other.
19. Let us therefore follow after these things which make for peace, and things whereby one may edify another.

20. For meat destroy not the work of God. All things indeed are pure, but it is evil for that man who eateth with offence.

21. It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak.

22. Hast thou faith? Have it to thyself before God. Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth.

23. And he that doubteth, is damned if he eat, because he eateth.

Religion are generally esteemed and beloved in it. Thus let us therefore act, and with all possible diligence pursue the things which tend to peace, and may promote our mutual edification in our common faith. And whoever thou art, that mayest disbelish the exhortation, in this connection, do not indulge so mean a taste, as for the sake of this or that particular kind of meat to destroy thy brother; who, as a man, would appear the noblest work of God, in this lower world, if all the peculiar considerations of Christianity were out of the question. It is true indeed, and I hinted above, that in themselves all things are pure; yet that is morally evil to a man that he eateth with offence and scandal; contrary to the rule of his own conscience and ensnaring to that of others.

In this view I may venture to say, it is good neither to eat any kind of flesh, though that would be a much more rigorous self-denial that I am now pleading for; nor even to drink wine, though in the most moderate degree; nor indeed to indulge in any thing else, by which thy brother is scandalized or weakened, that is, by which he may either be ensnared, or discouraged, in his religious course.

Thou wilt perhaps plead, that thou hast faith in a superior exercise, and beholdest Christianity in a more extensive and generous view. It is well! and I could not wish thy views should be more contracted. But if thou hast such a just persuasion of the indifference of these things, which others scruple; yet in circumstances like these, which I here suppose, have it to thyself before God: content thyself that he is witness to it, and conceal those apprehensions, just as they may be, in thine own breast, when they cannot be published with advantage, or without offence. But permit me to add, upon this occasion, happy [is] he who doth not condemn himself in the thing which he alloweth: it is a happy thing for a man, to be quite easy in what he does, and free, not only from the reproaches, but the suspicions of his conscience, and to use even lawful enjoyments only in a lawful and regular degree. But he that really in his conscience maketh a difference between one sort of food and another, is condemned by God as a sinner, if he eat out of unbridled appetite, vain complaisance, or weak shame. It must in such
Reflections on our obligation to avoid giving offence.

sect. XXXI. XIV. 23. For it may be laid down as a general maxim in all these cases, that whatsoever [is] not of faith, is sin; since the Divine authority ought to be so sacred with every man, as to engage him, not only to avoid what is plainly and directly contrary to it, but what he apprehends, or even suspects, to be so; though that apprehension, or suspicion, should chance to be founded on his own ignorance or mistake.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. Still let that great and final account which each must render of himself to God, be kept in our mind; that we may learn obedience to him, candour to each other, and a tender care to avoid every thing that might give unnecessary offence to our brethren. And in the views of it, let us learn always to reverence our own consciences, so as never to be engaged to do what we suspect to be unlawful: since no consideration can ever balance the infinite evil of offending God, and bringing guilt on our own souls. That is to us unclean, which we esteem to be so, and what is not of faith, is sin.

Let us also be cautious, that we do not incur guilt and condemnation, even by things which we allow, as in the main lawful; solicitously attending, not only to the general nature but the probable consequences of our actions. And where there is danger of injuring the souls of others, let us often reflect, that Christ died for them; and estimate, so far as we can conceive it, the value of souls, by which they were redeemed.

Let us also take great heed, that we do not give occasion to others, by our imprudent conduct to speak evil of that which is in itself good. And that we may not do it, let us study those great and generous notions of religion which this excellent passage of scripture gives us. Let it be written upon our hearts, that the kingdom of God is not meat or drink, that it doth not consist in a zeal for, or against, any of the little distinctions by which Christians have been so often divided, and which have been too frequently the occasion of mutual alienation in their affections. Let us study and practise more righteousness, and peace, and joy in the holy Ghost. The approbation of God, consequent on this, may well support us, though men should censure us as lukewarm; yea, perhaps as hypocritical, and interested too, in the candid regards
The strong to bear the infirmities of the weak;

Yet while we cultivate the amiable temper here set before us, bad as the world is, we may hope that we shall be accepted by many; and indeed, in proportion to this knowledge of our real character, by all whose acceptance and friendship is most to be valued. Let us not therefore be discouraged at any ill usage, which in particular instances we may meet with; but still follow the things which make for peace, and conduces mutual edification; and the God of peace will be with us, and Jesus, the great Lord of the church, which is his house, will smile on our attempts to build it up into one united and beautiful edifice, till he calls us to his temple above, where all is order and harmony, and love for ever.

SECT. XXXII.

The Apostle farther urges mutual condescension by new motives; particularly the example of Christ, and the goodness of God to us all, and the regard which Christ had shown to Jews and Gentiles, in bringing or sending the gospel to them, according to the tenor of prophecies, which he adds to the list of those produced above. Rom. XV. 1—17.

Romans XV. 1.
We then that are strong, ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves.

Romans XV. 1.
Seeing therefore, my brethren, it is so dangerous for any to do that concerning which they are not in their consciences satisfied that it is assuredly lawful; we ought to take great care, that we do not, by our uncharitable impositions, or irregular examples, lay a temptation in their way to do it. And we who are strong, that is, who perfectly understand the liberty which Christianity gives to its professors, ought with all tender sympathy and compassion to bear the infirmities of the weak, not only tolerating them, but in some instances restraining our own inclinations, out of regard to their advantage, and not as too many do, to please ourselves, to gratify our own inclinations and humours, whether others be comforted or grieved, edified or ensnared. On the contrary, let every one of us rather make it his care, so far as he lawfully and conveniently can, to please [his] neighbour.
For even Christ pleased not himself.

neighbour, where it may be for [his] real good, and condescend even to his ignorance and prejudices, where there is reason to hope it may conduce to his edification, and that of the church; which is nearly interested in the mutual tenderness of its members for each other.

3 And surely we must be disposed to act such a part toward our brethren: for we all well know, that the Lord Jesus Christ, our great and Divine Master, though so infinitely exalted above us, pleased not himself; but, when he vouchsafed in mercy to visit this low world of ours, instead of studying his own ease and pleasure, he submitted to an almost continual series of self-denial, mortification and trouble, for our sakes. He considered the weakness and infirmities of those about him, that he might teach them, and train them up for service, as they were able to bear it. (Mark iv. 33.) Yea, he even submitted with the greatest gentleness, to much reproach and contempt; as it is written, (Psalm lxix. 9,) in words which may well be applied to him; "The reproaches of those who reproached thee, are fallen upon me." I have placed myself in a world, where I have been afflicted with the wickedness of mankind, which I have continually seen and heard about me, and which has been through the whole course of my life, my continual grief and burden.

4 Now, by the way, I accommodate this text to the purpose before me, because I think, we may make the best we can of every scripture, to produce and cherish good dispositions, and pious sentiments in our hearts. For whatever things were formerly written, were written for our instruction, that we through patience and consolation of the scriptures, that is, by the strenuous exercise of for his good to edification.

3 For even Christ pleased not himself; but as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me.

for whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning; that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.

a The reproaches of those, &c.] Some expositors refer this to Christ's having undertaken by his sufferings to expiate the guilt of sin, every species of which may be considered as a reproach cast on the law and government of God. See Exodus in loc. I have given what seemed to me the more direct and natural sense, but will not say this other should be excluded, which may well agree both with the words and connection. It must, on the principle on which the apostle goes in many of his quotations, be very pleasant to observe, how all the expressions of the highest piety and devotion, to be found in the writings or discourses of good men of old, are applicable to Christ. But many learned critics maintain, that the lxixth Psalm may, in its original sense, be interpreted as a prophecy of the Messiah. How inexpressible a grief and burden the sight of so much wickedness must have been to so pure and holy a mind, as that of our Lord, it is impossible for us fully to conceive; but were we more like him, we might, and we certainly should, enter more into it, than we generally do.

b The
We should receive one another, as he received us.

5 Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be like-minded one towards another, according to Christ Jesus:

6 That ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

7 Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God.

8 Now I say, that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God to confirm the promises made unto the fathers.

The same mutual affection, according to the example of Jesus Christ.] Raphelius has evidently shewn, that κωνική συμπαθία signifies to agree in an harmonious and affectionate manner; and that the preposition ως may be rendered according to the example of. Compare Gal. iv. 28; 1 Pet. i. 15; Eph. iv. 24. See Raphel. Annot. ex Herod. in loc.
Abraham and the other fathers of that nation. And I would remind Jewish believers, that he also came that he might gather together all the children of God scattered abroad among the Gentiles, that they might glorify God for [his] mercy, in granting them a participation of the same privileges; and gave it in charge to the apostles, that they should raise disciples to him among all nations, (Mat. xxviii. 19.) So that it is a failure of love and duty to Christ, not to receive them. And accordingly the Gentiles are often spoken of in the Old Testament, as called to join with the Jews, in worshipping the God of Israel: as it is written, (Psal. xviii. 49.) “For this cause will I confess to thee among the Gentiles; and sing praises unto thy name.” And again he, that is, Moses saith, (Deut. xxxii. 43.) “Rejoice ye Gentiles, with his people;” which may intimate their being called to participate the blessings once peculiar to Israel.  

And again, David saith, (Psal. cxxvii. 1.) “Praise the Lord, all ye distant nations, and repeat his praise, all ye people.” Now surely this glorious privilege of an admission into the church, may justly engage the Gentile nations to praise God, in sublimer strains than any other occasion to which we can suppose either Moses or David to refer. And again Isaiah says, expressly in this view, (Isaiah xi. 10.) “There shall be a root from the stock of Jesse, and one arising to rule over the Gentiles, [and] in him shall the Gentiles hope and trust; not dreading destruction, but cheerfully expecting protection and salvation from thence.” It is evident, therefore, how unreasonable it would be to despise them, and how fit it is affectionately to receive, esteem, and embrace them.  

I am willing, therefore, to persuade myself, that this mutually candid temper will prevail among you, and in the confidence of it, I commend

9 And that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy; as it is written. For this cause I will confess to thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto thy name.

10 And again he saith, Rejoice ye Gentiles, with his people.

11 And again, Praise the Lord, all ye Gentiles; and hallow him, all ye people.

12 And again Esaias saith, There shall be a root of Jesse, and he that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles, in him shall the Gentiles trust.

13 Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing
c I will confess to thee, &c.] Diodati, and many others, suppose this to be only an allusion to the words of David in the place referred to. Mr. Pierce has taken great pains to prove, that the whole 18th Psalm is a direct prophecy of Christ, who is, according to his interpretation, to be considered as speaking throughout the whole of it. In which view he would render the title, “The song which David sang when God delivered him from the hand of Sheol, (instead of Saul,) that is, the grace.” But I cannot think his reasoning conclusive, and the 23d verse of that Psalm seems an invincible objection against this solution. I have taken a middle way, which I hope the attentive reader will see reason to approve. Compare chap. ii. 24, where the same method of quoting seems evidently to be taken.

d Sanctified
The apostle prays that the Romans might abound in hope.

mend you all, without any distinction, to the Divine grace and blessing. And accordingly, may the God of hope, from whose mercy all the hopes both of Jews and Gentiles are derived, fill you with all sacred joy and peace in believing. May he give you a well grounded complacency and comfort, in consequence of the growing strength of your faith, that you may abound in a more cheerful and lively hope of eternal glory, through the power of the Holy Spirit, confirming all those habits of grace which you experience, as planted and rooted in your souls by his agency. And cheerfully do I expect this, when I reflect on what he has already done; for I am indeed myself persuaded concerning you, my brethren, that ye are already full of goodness, and of unfeigned benevolence to each other, being filled, through these illuminating influences which you have received, with all spiritual knowledge, and so well acquainted with the whole nature and genius of the christian religion, as to be both able and inclined to admonish and encourage one another, as to this meek and peaceable disposition, which I have been recommending, and every other part of an amiable and valuable character. Nevertheless, brethren, I have written the more boldly unto you, in some sort as putting you in mind, because of the grace that is given to me of God.

16 That I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God; that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost.

17 I have therefore whereof

d Sanctified by the Holy Spirit, &c.] To explain this of the miraculous descent of the Holy Spirit; supposed to have happened at Antioch in Pisidia, on converts, who might be called the first-fruits of the idolatrous Gentiles, (Acts xiii. 52,) which is the interpretation advanced by the author of Miscell. Sacra, Vol. I. p. 112, and his followers, is not only a needless limitation of the more noble and natural sense here given, but in my judgment, for reasons in part given in my notes on the Acts, an explanation which goes upon various principles, precarious, or rather utterly incredible.
this respect, considerable matter of boasting in Christ Jesus, with respect to the things of God; and the office which I bear in his church; which I esteem far more honourable than any services of the Jewish state of priesthood.

IMPROVEMENT.

May the abundant communication of the Spirit that is in Jesus Ver. Christ, form us more to the amiable temper here recommended! 1 That we may prove the distinguished strength of our minds, by the superior fortitude with which we bear the infirmities of our 2 weaker brethren, and may seek the noble pleasure of pleasing our neighbours for their good, and to their edification. Let the generous self-denial of our great Lord be in this view before our 3 eyes; and let us endeavour to feel the reproaches which are cast upon God, much more sensibly than those which immediately fall upon ourselves.

4 Happy are we in the scriptures, which through Divine Providence and grace have been written for our instruction. May they inspire us with patience and consolation, and establish our souls in humble hope! May our hearts be cemented in the bond of mutual love, that with one mind, and one mouth we may glorify God, and receive each other, with an endearment like that, with which, if we are true believers, notwithstanding our smaller differences, we are received by him.

8—12 Mercy is communicated by Christ to Jews and Gentiles, who therefore are justly required to unite their praises, to the root of Jesse. Let us all trust under the shadow of this pleasant plant, and may we be filled with all joy and peace in believing. What can furnish out so calm a peace, so sublime a joy, as the Christian 13 hope? May we all abound in it by the power of the Holy Ghost. And surely if we are filled with such joy and hope, we must be 14 filled with all goodness too, with a truly benevolent temper towards others, which a sense of our own happiness tends most 16 powerfully to promote. We Gentiles have been presented to God as a holy offering: may we be sanctified more and more by his Spirit; and established in a firm confidence in Christ, that he will transact all our concerns with God, under the character of the great Mediator: esteeming that the most happy and glorious 17 circumstance in the station, which Providence may have assigned to us, which gives us the greatest opportunity of spreading the honour of so dear a name, and of presenting praises and services to God through him.

e With respect to the things of God, &c. xx. v. 29, 30. Raphelius very justly observes, that this phrase has a peculiar propriety, when applied to sacerdotal affairs, and especially victims presented to God; of which the apostle is here speaking. Other texts are illustrated by this remark, and particularly, Heb. ii. 17. S. c. Raphel. Not. cx. Xen. in loc.
The Apostle would not boast of what Christ had not wrought by him; 535

SECT. XXXIII.

The apostle takes occasion from what he had been saying, to mention the extent of his own labours, and his purposes of further journeys, in which he hoped to visit the Romans; in the meantime, earnestly recommending himself to their prayers. Rom. XV. 18, to the end.

Romans XV. 18.

I HAVE hinted above at the cause I have to rejoice and boast in Christ, as to what relates to God, and the office of my Christian ministry. For I will not dare to boast falsely, nor even speak any thing of what Christ hath not indeed wrought by me, to bring the Gentiles into obedience. No; God forbid! that I should either exceed the bounds of truth, in making the report, or arrogate any thing to myself, as my own work, when speaking of the conversions that have indeed been made. I humbly confess that it is Christ who hath wrought whatever is done: yet I boldly declare, that his grace and mercy hath, in this respect, distinguished me both in word and deed, by the manner in which he hath enabled me to speak, and the things which he hath strengthened me to perform. He hath wrought by the miraculous energy of signs and wonders, accomplished in and by the amazing power of the Spirit of God, which hath not only been wontly imparted to me, but bestowed on others by the laying on of my hands; so that thus supported, I have with the happiest effect fully preached and explained the gospel of Christ, from Jerusalem, Antioch, and Arabia, in the east, round about through all the Lesser Asia, and Greece, even as far as the western shores of Illyricum, which so nearly borders on your own celebrated Italy a. For it has still been the object of my ambition, so far as Providence would permit me to indulge it, to

19 Through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God; so that from Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ.

20 Yea, so have I strived to preach the gospel, not where Christ

a As far as the western shores of Illyricum. Though it is evident from hence that St. Paul before the date of this epistle, which was in the year 58, had preached the gospel in these regions, it is observable, that Luke takes no notice of this in the history of the Acts; where he also omits to mention the journey he took to Arabia, on his first conversion, and several other very remarkable facts, referred to in the first chapter of the second epistle to the Corinthians, and elsewhere; and it is very possible, that the visit to Crete, when Titus was left behind to ordain elders, Tit. i. 5, might be of this number.

b Object
preach the gospel, not where Christ was [already] named, lest I should seem desirous to build upon another man’s foundation, and so decline the difficulties which attend the settlement of new churches. Others indeed have done this, and little else; but I have chosen a different manner of acting; as it is written, in words well applicable to the series of my labours (Isa. liii. 15.) “They to whom nothing was declared concerning him, shall see, and they who have not heard, shall understand.” Thus have many received from my mouth, the first notices they have ever had of true religion, and of the method of salvation

22 by the Great Redeemer. The consequence therefore was, that I have been long hindered from coming to you; which, out of my singular affection for you, I was very desirous of doing; though it be something contrary to the method of proceeding which I generally choose, as you have the Christian religion already, by the Divine grace, most happily planted among you.

23 But now having no longer place either at Corinth, or elsewhere in these Grecian climates, no more work of this kind remaining to be done here, of which Providence seems to open any probable prospect, and having also on various accounts, a great desire for many years to come to you; I will attempt to put it into execution.

24 If I go into Spain, I will endeavour, if possible, to come to you; for I hope quickly to have an opportunity of going thither, and as I pass by, will

b Object of my ambition, as far as Providence would permit me to indulge it, to preach the gospel, not where Christ was already named, &c.] The meaning to be sure cannot be, that Paul scoured to come after any other Christian minister; which would have argued a height of temper very inconsistent with the humility of this blessed apostle; and does not agree with what we read in the history of the Acts, of his going to preach the gospel at Damascus, Antioch and Jerusalem; to which it seems probable, Troas, if not Corinth, or Ephesus, may be added. It may signify that, far from declining dangers and oppositions, which might especially be expected in first breaking up, as it were, the foundation of heathen and unevangelized countries, he rather felt a sublime ambition, as ενδιαφέρεται signifies, (see Elsner, Vol. II. p. 64,) to make the first proclamation of a Redeemer’s name, in places where it had before been quite unheard of. And probably, in mentioning this, he may glance upon those false apostles who crept into churches which he had planted, and endeavoured to establish their own reputation and influence there, by alienating the hearts of his own converts from him, their spiritual father; while like some in our own days, who have trod most exactly in their footsteps, they built on his grand and noble foundation an edifice of wood, and hay, and stubble, 1 Cor. iii. 12.

c If I go to Spain, &c.] It appears probable from hence, concerning the principle which St. Paul chose to govern himself by, of not building on another man’s foundation, that no apostle had yet planted any church in Spain; which, as Dr. Geddes justly observes, very ill agrees with the legend of St. James; for, according to that, he had now been 15 years in Spain, and had erected several bishoprics there. Geddes, Miss. Vol. II. p. 221.

b Churches
you; for I trust to see you in my journey, and to be brought on my way thitherward by you, if first I be somewhat filled with your company.

But now I go unto Jerusalem, to minister unto the saints.

For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia, to make a certain contribution for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem.

It hath pleased them verily; and their debtors they are. For if the Gentiles have been made partakers of their spiritual things their duty is also to minister unto them in carnal things.

When therefore I have performed this and have sealed to them this fruit, I will come by you into Spain.

And I am sure, that when I come unto you, I shall come in the fulness of the blessing will contrive, if I can, to see you, and shall expect to be brought forward by you in my way thither, by the kind attendance of some of my friends at Rome, and the refreshment which my spirit may receive from others; if I may first, not only have a short interview in passing, but make such an abode with you as to be in some degree satisfied with your [company:] I say in some degree, for I know that if I were to indulge my own affection to you, my visit would be much longer than the views of duty elsewhere will permit.

This I speak with relation to my future designs: but I am now going to Jerusalem, ministering to the necessities of the saints there, by such contributions as I have raised for their subsistence, or may farther collect, as I prosecute my journey. For it hath pleased [the churches 26 of] Macedonia and Achaia, to make a certain collection for the poor saints, their believing brethren, that are in Jerusalem, who are exposed to such peculiar persecution and affliction. I say, it hath pleased them to do this; and, though I acknowledge their free love and generosity in it, yet I may say, that in a sense, they are their debtors: for if the Gentiles have been brought into so happy a union with God’s once peculiar people, and are made partakers of their spiritual things the invaluable blessings of the gospel, first brought to them from Jerusalem, and by persons of the Jewish nation too; they ought certainly to be ready, with all religious gratitude and respect, to minister to them in their carnal things, and impart the inferior blessings of Providence, in which they so much more abound. Having therefore dispatched this affair, and sealed 28 to them, that is, safely delivered as under seal, this present, which is the fruit of that love and care which their Gentile brethren so justly express towards them, I will, if it please God to give me a favourable opportunity, come by you into Spain. And as I doubt not, but you will pray for me, that my coming may be comfortable, and useful for your confirmation in religion; so I have a cheerful confidence, that God will

Churches of Macedonia, &c.] As we read of no more than one collection of the Macedonian churches, which was that directed by Paul, when he went from Ephesus to Macedonia, (Acts xx. 1,) in the year of Christ 57; this circumstance seems to fix the date of this epistle pretty early in 58; as was observed in the introduction, and the former note there referred to.
He desires their prayers, and gives them his benediction.

sect. xxxii.

Rom. xv. 29

30 Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me;

31 That I may be delivered from them that do not believe, in Judea; and that my service which I have for Jerusalem, may be accepted of the saints.

32 That I may come unto you with joy by the will of God, and may with you be refreshed.

33 Now the God of peace be with you all. Amen.

IMPROVE-

e By the love of the Spirit.] Some would explain this of the love which the Spirit of God bears to us, or the affection which we owe to that gracious agent; and were we certain, that either of these were the genuine sense, important consequences would follow.

† Join your utmost strength with mine.] Eisner, (Observ. Vol. II. p. 65,) has a beautiful note on this word συνεργεῖτε με, to shew how exactly that is the import of it.

* That I may be rescued from the unbelievers in Judea. How extreme their bigotry and rage was, appears from their behaviour to him at the very time here referred to, Acts xxi.—xxiv. It was from a sense of the great importance of his life to the cause of Christianity, that he is thus urgent; else we may be assured, he would gladly have given it up. Phil. i. 21, &c.
IMPROVEMENT.

Let us behold with pleasure the modesty and humility which is joined with all the zeal of this holy apostle, while he thus obliquely owns, in a manner which shows how familiar the thought was to his mind, that all he had done in the Christian ministry, and for the propagation and advancement of the gospel, was only what Christ had done by him, to procure such obedience of the Gentiles, both in word and deed.

Adored be the grace that made his labours so successful, and sowed the blessed seed so wide by his diligent hand, from Jerusalem unto Illyricum. Most divine instructions did he give them in matters of faith, and he taught them to express that faith by their works. While he was dead to all thoughts of enriching himself, and in some instances, chose rather to maintain himself, by his own labours, than to subsist on the bounty of others, his liberal soul devised liberal things for his necessitous brethren. He raised a noble collection, and was much concerned, not only that it might be safely, but acceptably delivered.

Well may our souls be edified, by observing the things which lay nearest the heart of this generous apostle, that coming to the Christian friends at Rome, he might come in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ, and that if he was spared through their prayers, it might be for public usefulness. St. Paul, dealt as he was to human applause, was from much nobler motives, solicitous about his acceptance; and he shews by his manner of speaking, what a sense he had of the degree in which it depended upon the turn and disposition which God, should be pleased to give to the spirits of men: may this just and pious thought frequently dwell upon the hearts of the ministers of Christ!

Some of the prayers, which the apostle so affectionately bespeaks, were answered; and some seemed to be forgotten: Yet did God make, what seemed the rejection of some, the means of answering the rest. He was for a while delivered into the hands of those in Judea, who believed not; and this providence, which might have seemed an invincible obstacle to his design, proved the occasion of bringing him to Rome, and promoted the success of his ministry there.

Let us adore the God of grace, and peace, who works the most important ends, by methods to us unthought of; and let us be greatly cautious, that we do not rashly judge that he hath rejected our prayers, because we do not see them answered in that particular way which might have been more agreeable to our own wishes.
SECT. XXXIV.

The Apostle, after recommending Phœbe to the Romans, particularly salutes several of his friends resident among them. Rom. XVI. 1—16.

HAVING thus dispatched the substance of my epistle, I would add, by way of postscript, something relating to a few particular Christian friends, with us, or with you: and first would recommend to you the bearer of this epistle, Phœbe, our sister, who is, not only a partaker with us in the profession of the gospel, but in the office of a stated servant, or deaconness, of the church in Cenchrea; in the neighbourhood of which I write to you. And I desire that you would entertain her, in regard to her relation to the Lord Jesus Christ, our common Saviour, with all Christian affection, and in a manner becoming those that profess themselves saints, separated from the world, to the honour of his name; and that you would assist her in any thing in which she may need it of you; for I can assure you, she has been, in her office, an helper of many, and of myself in particular; on which account she is well worthy of your regard, and will I hope meet with a very kind reception from all that love me, or have any concern for the common cause.

I desire you would also salute the pious Priscilla, and her worthy consort Aquila, who have both deserved the name of my fellow labourers in Christ Jesus, as they have each of them, according

* A stated servant, or deaconness.] Compare 1 Tim. v. 9. That there were some grave and pious matrons engaged in such an office, in the primitive church, is, I think, very apparent from these places: but it is obvious there were circumstances which rendered such sort of servants much more useful and necessary in the churches at that time, than they would now generally be.

b The church at Cenchrea.] As Paul mentions the church in Cenchrea, as distinct from that at Corinth, though Cenchrea lay in the suburbs of it, I must submit it to the candid reader, whether it be not probable, that it had a distinct pastor, or bishop of its own.

c Priscilla and Aquila.] This excellent couple appear, by this passage, to be returned to Rome, on the ceasing of that edict against the Jews, which had driven them from thence, in the reign of Claudius, Acts xvii. 2. Priscilla seems to have been a woman of great note, and probably of distinguished genius, and influence; which appears, not only from the manner in which she is here named, but also from the edification which the eloquent Apollos received from her instructions, in concurrence with those of her husband.
And sends several salutations in his own name,

(Who have for my life laid down their own necks: unto whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles.)

Likewise greet the church that is in their house. Salute my well-beloved Epenetus, who is the first-fruits of Achaia unto Christ.

6 Greet Mary, who bestowed much labour on us.

7 Salute Andronicus and Junia my kinsmen and my fellow-prisoners, who are of note among the apostles, who also were in Christ before me.

It is very probable he might be converted at the same time with Stephanas, called also the first-fruits of Achaia, (1 Cor. xvi. 15,) for there is no manner of necessity to understand that expression, the very first Christian convert. Indeed it is possible, Epenetus might be one of that happy family to which this epistle is given.

Dr. Jenkins very justly observes, that this list of names can be no objection at all to the authority of this epistle; for it might be an encouragement to the persons thus particularly mentioned, might conciliate some additional respect to them, whereby their usefulness might be promoted, and would render each of those persons a kind of witness to the genuineness of the epistle, as we may naturally suppose it was shewed to each of them. Jenk. on Christianity, Vol. II. p. 57.

Dr. Diodati thinks, that apostles here signifies evangelists; and that the meaning is, that these persons were noted messengers of the churches, 2 Cor. viii. 23; Phil. ii. 23. But I rather apprehend with Mr. Cradock, (Apost. Hist. p. 43,) that they were some early converts, who had been known and much esteemed by the apostles, before the dispersion occasioned by the death of Stephen, (Acts vii. 2,) and if so, perhaps Paul might once have been active in persecuting them, and have learned their names at first, with an hostile intent of hunting them down to destruction.

5 Those
the Lord. Salute Amplias, my beloved in the Lord, for whom I have a most affectionate friendship, cemented in the bonds of mutual faith and love. Salute alo Urbanus, my fellow-labourer in the gospel of Christ, to the service of which he is so faithfully devoted, and with him my beloved Stachys, of whose friendship I cannot but retain an affectionate remembrance. Salute Apelles, whose long experienced worth renders him thoroughly approved in the cause of Christ, as a disciple of a character undoubtedly honourable. Salute also those [of the family] of Aristobulus, and assure the Christians that hold the lowest station in it, that they are not forgotten by me. Salute my cousin Herodion, still dearer to me in the ties of grace, than in those of nature; and those belonging to [the household of] Narcissus, who are believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. Salute those excellent women Tryphena and Tryphosa, who, according to their stations, have laboured with great diligence in the service of the Lord. Salute the beloved Persis, who distinguished herself among many who were faithful and diligent; so that it may properly be said, she laboured much in the Lord. Salute Rufus, chosen in the Lord, whom I esteem as a Christian of a most excellent character; and pay the most affectionate respects, in my name, to his mother and mine: for so I may call her, on account of the maternal tenderness and care which she has often shewn towards me. Salute Asyncrius, Phlegon, Hermas, Patrobas, Hermes, and all the brethren with them, as if every one of them had been particularly named. Salute Philologus, and Julius, Nereus, and his sister, and Olympas, and all the other sincere saints and Christians, that are with them; whom

8 Greet Amplias my beloved in the Lord.

Salute Urbanus our helper in Christ, and Stachys my beloved.

10 Salute Appelles approved in Christ. Salute them which are of Aristobulus' household.

11 Salute Herodion, my kinsman. Greet them that be of the household of Narcissus, which are in the Lord.

12 Salute Tryphena and Tryphosa, who labour in the Lord. Salute the beloved Persis, which laboured much in the Lord.

13 Salute Rufus chosen in the Lord, and his mother and mine.

14 Salute Asyncrius, Phlegon, Hermas, Patrobas, Hermes, and the brethren which are with them.

15 Salute Philologus, and Julius, Nereus, and his sister, and Olympas,

8 Those [of the family] of Aristobulus.] The Roman church hath consecrated days to the honour of many of the saints mentioned in this chapter, whom they declare, I know not on what sufficient authority, to have been martyrs. See L'Enf. Pref. to the Romans, p. 6, 7. To these they have added Aristobulus, and Narcissus, though there is no certain evidence that they were Christians. It seems most probable, they were persons of high rank, who had each a great family of slaves; and some of them being Christian converts, the apostle would not forget them, low as their rank in life was, when he was saluting his brethren in so particular a manner. We may observe, what a regard the apostle had for foreign churches, when he informed himself of the names, circumstances, and abodes, of so many then in Rome.

b His mother and mine.] Hence some have thought that Rufus was at least half-brother to Paul, but perhaps he might in this expression refer to the maternal care this good woman had taken of him.

1 All the saints, &c.] Calvin, and others, very justly observe, that had Peter been now at Rome, he would undoubtedly have
whom with the rest of the persons that I have mentioned, I most sincerely honour and love.

In a word, whether you be Jews, or Gentiles, when you meet at your assemblies, salute one another with a holy kiss, and take care that the kiss which you give to each other, at the conclusion of your worship, be expressive of a pure and undissembled affection, and conducted with the gravest and most decent circumstances. All the churches of Christ in these parts salute you, as they, with me, have heard of the eminent figure you make in religion, and the many excellent persons who are resident among you.

IMPROVEMENT.

Though so much of this section be a mere catalogue of names, it is not without its moral and religious instruction. We see in it the good heart of the apostle; how full he was of the sentiments of Christian friendship; how solicitous he was to express his esteem and love for his brethren in the Lord. And God hath made him the means of transmitting to posterity, the memorials of many excellent persons, of whom we no where else read, or hear any thing: of whom all that we know is, that they were such as deserved the particular affection of St. Paul, and were professors of the gospel at Rome, in the reign of a very worthless and wicked prince, under whom it is highly probable, that some of them suffered martyrdom for Christ.

His large heart opened to embrace them all, whether by birth Ver. Jews or Gentiles: and as they shared in his salutations, we cannot 1, 2 doubt, but they shared in his prayers too. We find some of these pious, and much esteemed friends of the apostle, were women, of whom he speaks with great regard, as of persons whom divine grace had made very useful in the church: who had been helpers of many, and particularly of him; who had laboured, yea, had laboured much in the Lord. Let not that sex therefore think that it is cut off from the service of Christ, because the ministry is appropriated to men. Eminently useful have many of them been.

The have been named; since no one in this numerous catalogue was of a dignity and eminence, by any means comparable to him; and yet, if he were not there at this time, the whole tradition of the Roman bishops, as the Roman church delivers it, fails in the most fundamental article of all.

A holy kiss.] The custom of thus saluting each other, was borrowed from the Jewish synagogue; and as chastely and prudently as it was managed, it seems to have been the occasion of those false and scandalous reports which were so industriously propagated among the heathen of the adulterous and incestuous practices, in Christian assemblies, on which account, it seems to have been laid aside very early.
The most valuable ministers have often been assisted by them, in the success of their work, while their pious care, under the restraint of the strictest modesty and decorum, has happily and effectually influenced children, servants, and young friends; yea, has been the means of sowing the seeds of religion in tender minds, before they have been capable of coming under ministerial care.

3 Generous was the zeal which Aquila and Priscilla shewed in exposing even their own lives in the defence of this holy apostle. Great obligations did they, thereby, lay upon all the churches of the Gentiles, and on us, who, at this distance of time, receive so many blessings from the long continuance of St. Paul's life, which they were ready so heroically to defend at the hazard of their own.

Truly valuable were these mutual friendships, of which, zeal for Christ was the common bond; lasting, and indeed everlasting. These excellent persons are doubtless the companions of Paul in glory now, and will many of them be his crown in the day of the Lord. Some of them indeed were in Christ before him; and he speaks of it as peculiarly to their honour. Let those, who were early in Christ, rejoice in the thought. Let those who came later into his church, be exhorted to exert themselves with the greater vigour in his service, that they may recover the time they have lost: and let us all learn to esteem it, as the most substantial proof of our love to those who are peculiarly dear to us, to shew, upon all occasions, how sincerely we wish, that they may early form an acquaintance with Christ; that they may constantly walk in him, and grow up in all things in him, as our common Head.

SECT. XXXV.

The Apostle concludes with other salutations, and a necessary caution against those who would divide the church, together with a doxology suited to the general purport of what he had been writing. Rom. XVI. 17, to the end.

Romans XVI. 17.

And now, having dispatched these salutations, which Christian friendship has largely dictated, let me conclude my epistle to you, with a few words of additional advice. And I would particularly exhort you, brethren, to have your eyes upon, and to mark out for the caution of others, those persons, whether in public or private life, which cause divisions and offences [among you] by false doctrines, factious tempers, and scandalous lives; therein doing contrary to that pure, certain and uniting doctrine

Romans XVI. 17.

Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences, contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned.
And rejoices on the account of his brethren. 

18 For they that are such, serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.

19 For your obedience is come abroad unto all men. I am glad therefore on your behalf: but yet I would have you wise unto that which is good and simple concerning evil.

trine which you have learned of us, the apostles of Jesus Christ, who have been commissioned by him, as the authentic teachers of his gospel. And when you have discovered such pernicious seducers, avoid them, so as to have no intimate converse with them; nor even to permit them to continue in your communion, if they will not be reclaimed by the milder methods of brotherly admonition. For you may be assured, that such, whatever they may pretend, serve not the Lord Jesus Christ; under whose commission we so apparently act, and the nature of whose religion is so holy and benevolent: but on the contrary, it is plain they serve their own belly; they have only their own secular interest in view, and hope to gain some temporal advantage, by setting themselves up as heads of parties among you; and by fair speeches, and flattering forms of address, they deceive the hearts of the innocent and well-meaning, and lead them into snares of which they are little aware.

It is very possible, that having done so much mischief here at Corinth, and at other places, they may also make some attempts upon you; especially considering the figure you make in the christian world; but I trust their endeavours will be unsuccessful, for the report of your exemplary obedience to the dictates of our holy religion, is come abroad unto all: therefore I rejoice on your account, in hope you will overcome this, and every other danger, and maintain the good character you have already gained. But I give you this caution out of my abundant tenderness and care; because I am desirous you may be wise, and sagacious, with respect to every opportunity of practising and maintaining that which is good, and as simple as possible, with regard to that which is evil: perfectly free from all ill views, and designs of every kind. And I know, how much the insinuations of those men tend to destroy those benevolent dispositions, which should ever reign in the hearts of christians, and to fill them with such prejudices against each other, as may produce mutual injuries. And

a Flattering forms of address.] Εὐροηγία in this connection, has a force, which I knew not how to express, but by this paraphrasis. We see here what these weapons are which these false apostles opposed to the miracles of the true.
And I have an agreeable persuasion, that you will take care to maintain this happy mixture of innocence and prudence, and will succeed in that care. Yes, my brethren, I am well assured, that the God of peace, from whom we derive all our peace and happiness, and who delights in seeing this peaceable temper prevail among his servants, will quickly bruise Satan under your feet? will defeat the artifices by which the great enemy of God and men is endeavouring to insinuate himself into the church, and to infuse his own malignant spirit into its members. God will enable you, animated by the first great promise, (Gen. iii. 15.) which you have seen so illustriously fulfilled, to trample on the sly deceiver; as on a wounded serpent, whose head your great Leader hath already crushed. And for this purpose, may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, which hath already been in so considerable a degree imparted to you, [be] still more constantly and abundantly with you! Amen.

21 I add, by way of postscript, that Timothy, my pious and zealous fellow labourer, to whose affection I am so much obliged, and Lucius, and Jason, and Sosipater, the messengers of the church at Beroea, and both of them my kinsmen, salute you with sincere Christian friendship.

22 I Tertius, or Silas, who wrote [this] epistle, while the apostle Paul dictated it to me, as his secretary, do also most affectionately salute you in the Lord.

23 The generous Gaius, who is my host, and indeed, I may say, that of the whole church, so ready is he to every act of hospitality and goodness, salutes you [and] Erastus the steward of the city, [also] salutes you; and so doth one Quartus, who, though you may not particularly know him, is a Christian brother, whose name I think worthy of being inserted.

Once I submit to consideration, whether some of the intricate, and some of the unfinished sentences, which we meet with in these epistles, might not be owing to this method of writing by an amanuensis. They, whose variety of business has obliged them to dictate to others, and use their pens in such a manner, will be very sensible, this is no absurd, or very improbable conjecture. Compare Jer. xxxvi. 17, 18, as an instance of a similar nature.

20 And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen.

21 Timotheus my work-fellow, and Lucius, and Jason, and Sosipater, my kinsman, salute you.

22 I Tertius, who wrote this epistle, salute you in the Lord.

23 Gaius mine host, and of the whole church, saluteth you. Erastus the chamberlain of the city saluteth you, and Quartus a brother.
Once more receive my repeated good wishes, that the best of all blessings may attend you; even that the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ may be with you all; to which I again put my cordial Amen.

Now, let me sum up all, with ascribing praise to the great Author of all the blessings, of which I have been writing; even to him, who as he has called you to participate these invaluable blessings, is able to strengthen you in every virtuous disposition and good resolution; according to the tenor of my gospel, even the preaching of Jesus Christ, as our only and almighty Saviour, whom I proclaim, wherever I come, to Gentiles, as well as to Jews: a gospel which, however it is opposed as contrary, is indeed most exactly agreeable to the Revelation which God has now been pleased to make of that mystery in ancient times kept in silence, and never before so fully exhibited. But, adored be his goodness, it is now made manifest according to the tenor of the prophetic scriptures, according to the commandment of the eternal God. And it is not only discovered to us by the Spirit, but publicly made known to all the Gentile nations, as well as the people of Israel, for the obedience of faith; that they, firmly believing it, may yield a correspondent practical submission to it, and so obtain by it everlasting salvation; subjecting themselves in all things to the sacred authority of the only wise God, who has so prudently contrived, and so effectually executed, this grand scheme. To him, on the whole, glory by Jesus Christ, in all the churches, and in the general assembly, to endless ages! Amen.

IMPROVE—

expression intimates that he was a Christian minister. Compare Phil. iv. 21, 22, but I cannot say it appears sufficiently evident.

c. Now to him &c.] This doxology is found, in many copies, at the end of the sixth chapter, and in the Alexandrian MS. is inserted both there and here. Jerome says, that Marcian rejected the two last chapters, as contrary to his opinion: and Sir Norton Knatchbull conjectures, that, in order to prevent any suspicion, as if the epistle ended with the sixth chapter, some orthodox Christian transferred this passage from thence, which he supposes to have been its true place. Dr. Mills is of the same opinion; and supposes the two last chapters to have been added by way of postscript, as the apostle had time, before he sent it away. All the other epistles of Paul end with the benediction.

f. Mystery, &c.] Many commentators explain these verses as referring to the calling of the Gentiles into the church; and then some of them suppose the χρονος, καιρος, to refer to the division of time by jubilees; but it is certain, the words will make good and weighty sense on the different interpretation we have given; and as the jubilees so early grew into neglect among the Jews, it would be less natural to suppose, the periods of time they measured, to be designed here.
Worthy are these concluding words of being deeply engraven on every heart. The gospel was a mystery, long concealed in the breast of the Divine wisdom, and opened but by imperfect hints, even to the church itself, in former ages. Let us be humbly thankful, that it is now made manifest; and that we are among the nations who are called to the obedience of the faith. Let us be solicitous to answer that call; and if we have already done it in any measure, let us remember, we are still surrounded with many snares and dangers; so that we have continual need of being strengthened and confirmed by him who hath done us the honour to call us into the fellowship of his gospel. Let us walk worthy of it, and faithfully endeavour to advance its interests, in a noble superiority to all those secular and mercenary motives, by which bad men, under a Christian profession, are often influenced, and in consequence of which they often abuse even the ministration of religion to the most infamous purposes.

Let us shew, how thoroughly we have imbibed the spirit of this Divine dispensation, by the generosity of our sentiments; guarding both against scandals and divisions; and aiming in wisdom, integrity, and love, both to unite and to edify the body of Christ. Satan will indeed lay discouragements and stumbling-blocks in our way, and perhaps may sometimes use very subtle arts to promote discord and division among those who ought to be most dear to each other in the bonds of the Lord. But let us use a holy caution, and commit ourselves cheerfully to the Divine keeping; and we may humbly hope, that the God of peace will make us victorious over all the artifice and power of our spiritual enemies, and will shortly bruise Satan under our feet.

Let us humbly hope that he will, through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, in virtue of that great original promise which was given to cheer our first parents, when they lay under their deep distress, and heavy load of new-contracted guilt. (Gen. iii. 13.) And as we see how God hath taken the subtle in his own craftiness, and triumphed over Satan, by that event which he laboured to accomplish, as his own triumph, even the death of our Divine Redeemer; let us ascribe to him, as the only wise God, everlasting glory. And O, that we may join with all the redeemed world in this ascription, when the accuser of the brethren, the great enemy of God and man, with all his adherents and instruments, shall be cast out for ever. Amen.

N. B. A note, added to the end of this epistle, says, that it was written to the Romans from Corinth, by Phile, servant of the church of Cenchrea. Part of this, the first verse of this last chapter justifies; but as the most ancient manuscripts have not these notes, and some of them are plainly contrary to some passages in the epistle, to which they are annexed, they are to be esteemed of no authority.

THE END OF THE FAMILY EXPOSITOR ON THE ROMANS.
THE FAMILY EXPOSITOR:
OR, A PARAPHRASE
ON THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE
TO THE CORINTHIANS.

WITH
CRITICAL NOTES, AND A PRACTICAL IMPROVEMENT OF EACH SECTION.
A

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

TO THE

PARAPHRASE AND NOTES

ON

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS.

The apostle Paul had been the instrument in the hand of God of planting a numerous Christian church, chiefly of Gentile converts, at Corinth; where his ministry was so successful, that he continued there near two years; (Acts xviii. 1—18.) Corinth was a city of Achaia, situated on the Isthmus, which joins Peloponnesus, (now called the Morea,) to the rest of Greece. From the convenience of its situation for commerce, it abounded in riches, and was furnished with all the accommodations, with all the elegancies and superfluities of life. This by too natural a consequence, led its inhabitants into luxury, lewdness, and all manner of vice; and they were accordingly infamous even to a proverb.

About the space of three years after the apostle had left Corinth, to preach the gospel in other parts of Greece, he had occasion to write this epistle to the Corinthians; which he accordingly wrote from Ephesus about the year 57, the 3d of the emperor Nero. See sect. 42, note 4, p. 183, and sect. 44, note 3, p. 192.

The reason for which this epistle was written, was, to answer some important queries proposed by the Corinthians; and correct the various criminal irregularities and disorders of which they were guilty.

In correcting the abuses with which they were chargeable. The first article on which the apostle thought himself obliged to insist, related to the parties and factions into which they were fallen, and the opposition which was made by some of them to his own apostolical mission. On this head he largely discourses in the first four chapters; introducing the epistle with an affectionate address to the Corinthian converts, in which he congratulates
tulates them on the rich variety of gifts and graces God had bestowed upon them; and animates their hopes of his continued favour in the Lord Jesus Christ, even till the day of his final appearance; (chap. i. 1—9.) And then, expressing his great concern on account of their animosities and factions, he expostulates with them on the unreasonableness of setting up Christian ministers as heads of parties, when they were under such strong engagements to Christ, as their common Saviour and Master; (ver. 10—16.) And as he well knew, that a fond regard to eloquence and philosophy, to which some of the Corinthian teachers made high pretensions, was one great occasion of their divisions, he sets himself to show how little stress was to be laid upon them; which he illustrates by the choice that God had made of gospel-preachers, entirely destitute of these boasted accomplishments; (ver. 17, to the end.) The apostle further explains the reasons for which he had declined all ostentation of eloquence, when he came among the Corinthians, and particularly insists on the extraordinary nature of the facts and doctrines he was to teach, which were of a much higher original than any discoveries which human wit or learning could make, and were to be traced up to the immediate teachings of the Holy Spirit; their nature being so wonderful, that it was difficult for the corrupted minds of men to receive them, even when they were taught; (chap. ii. throughout.) After this the apostle more directly comes to the case of their animosities and divisions, and reproves their carnality in contending about human teachers, and urges many important considerations to cure them of so unbecoming a temper; (chap. iii. 1—9.) Reminding them for this purpose, of the great trial which every man's work must undergo, the guilt of polluting by unhallowed divisions the temple of God, the vanity of human wisdom in his sight, and of glorying in men, since ministers and all things are appointed for the common benefit of believers; (ver. 10, to the end.) The apostle further discourses with the same view of the nature of the ministerial office, reminds them of the final judgment of him who searcheth all hearts, and the obligation they were under to the Divine goodness for every advantage by which they were distinguished from others; (chap. iv. 1—7.) And as a particular opposition had been made in the Corinthian church to himself, he represents the hardships and dangers to which he and his brethren had been, and were exposed in the service of the gospel, and the obligations which he had in an especial manner laid upon them; warning them not to force him upon severities, which he was very unwilling to use; (ver. 8, to the end.) And having thus discoursed with admirable wisdom, faithfulness, and zeal, he dismisses, for the present, this part of his subject; which, on account of his personal concern in it, was attended with circumstances of peculiar delicacy.

The second topic which the apostle considers, was the case of a notorious offender in the Corinthian church, who was guilty of a most scandalous incest with his father's wife. Animated, therefore,
To the first Epistle to the Corinthians.

free, with the warm zeal for the honour of Christ, for the purity and credit of the Christian church, with a benevolent concern for the conviction of the offender, and that others might be deterred from the like enormous practices, he exhorts them, upon these principles to beware of all unnecessary connection with him, and to exclude him from Christian communion; (chap. v. throughout.)

The third article, which in this epistle, St. Paul exhibits against the Corinthians, is, that by a covetous and litigious temper, they were led contrary to the rules of Christian prudence and love, and sometimes contrary even to the principles of justice, to prosecute their brethren in the heathen courts. This he solemnly censures and condemns; and closes what he offers upon this head, by warning them of the sad consequences which would attend the indulgence of those criminal dispositions in which Christianity found them, and from which it was intended to deliver them; (chap. vi. 1—11.)

In the fourth place, the apostle Paul cautions them against the sin of fornication, to which they had been, in their Gentile state, greatly addicted. And it should seem, that having been formerly wont to look upon this heinous crime as lawful, there were, even now, some among them, who reckoned it among the things indifferent; and that they were not in general, sufficiently convinced of its enormity. He therefore introduces what he proposed to say on this subject, with some useful reflections on things really indifferent and then illustrates the heinous evil of fornication from views peculiar to the Christian religion; (ver. 12, to the end.)

Having thus largely, and with great faithfulness and plainness, corrected some sad disorders with which the Corinthians were chargeable,

The apostle proceeds to the other main end of his epistle, namely, to answer certain important questions which it seems the Corinthians had proposed. And here,

He determines, First, Those which related to the marriage-state. Some questions upon this would naturally arise among the first converts to Christianity; as, Whether they should disown and withdraw from their partners, if they continued unbelievers? And, whether it was good to marry in the present circumstances of the church? when the contracting new, and especially such near alliances, in those times of persecution, would involve in peculiar difficulties those who should enter into the marriage- relation; which they might notwithstanding judge it proper for other reasons to do. Now the apostle shews at his entrance upon this subject, that in some circumstances the marriage-state should be entered into, and continued in: but in others, foreborn, particularly at that time; and enjoins wives not to depart from their husbands and husbands not to dismiss their wives; (chap. vii. 1—11.) He then shews that marriages were not to be dissolved, as some thought they might, on account of a difference in religion; and very properly urges in the general, contentment with the stations in which they were called, and a concern to serve
serve God in their proper condition, whether married or single, bound or free; (ver. 12—24.) And with regard to single persons, he asserts the inexpediency of their marrying in the circumstances of the church at that juncture, inculcating a serious sense of the shortness of time, as the best remedy against inordinate attachment to any secular interest; (ver. 25, to the end.)

A second query which the Corinthians had proposed to the apostle to be resolved, was, How far they might comply with their heathen neighbours in eating things sacrificed to idols? St. Paul upon this reminds them, that though all Christians might well be supposed to know the vanity of those imaginary deities to which the sacrifices were offered; yet it might prove to some, an occasion of grief and scandal, that the professors of Christianity should partake of these sacrifices in their temple; which therefore charity would require them by all means to avoid: chap. viii. throughout.) And having, in this instance, urged them to a Christian condescension to their brethren, that he might enforce the principle more strongly, by his own condescension to the weak, in having a maintenance from the Corinthians, he introduces what he had to say upon this head, with a short discourse on the right, which as a gospel-minister, he really had to be supported by those among whom he laboured; which he argues both from natural equity, and scripture principles; (chap. ix. 1—14.) He then proceeds to shew, that out of tenderness to them, and to prevent exceptions to the gospel, he had waved this right, and had been cautious upon all occasions to avoid offence, by exercising self-denial, which he illustrates by a very expressive simile taken from those who contended in the Grecian games, (ver. 15, to the end.) And to recommend this self-denial and holy caution to the Corinthians, he represents the privileges which Israel of old enjoyed, and the displeasure which, notwithstanding this, God manifested against them in the wilderness, when they indulged their irregular and luxurious desires, and in contempt of the manna, lusten after quails; an example, proper to put the Corinthians in mind of the danger they run of incurring the Divine displeasure, if they should be induced, for the sake of gratifying a luxurious appetite, to partake of entertainments upon things offered to idols, in the heathen temples; (chap. x. 1—13.) That he might therefore caution them against all approaches to idolatry, he particularly argues, from that communion, which as Christians, they had with Christ at his table, that they ought to keep at the remotest distance from what might justly be called having communion with devils; (ver. 14,—22.) After which he lays down more particular directions, as to the cases and circumstances in which things sacrificed to idols might, or might not, lawfully be eaten; and urges further considerations, to engage them willingly to resign their own gratification for the glory of God, and the good of their brethren; (ver. 23, chap xi 1.)

The apostle now proceeds to a third query, concerning the manner in which women should deliver any thing in public, when
To

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the First Epistle to the Corinthians.

And after having settled this
im,^ulse called to it.
corrects the indecency of women's propheBeing thus led
16.)
syinj; with their head uncovered; (ver. 2
to consider circumstances which attended the Christian worship,
he liikps the occasion naturally aflforded, of introducing a disconvse upon several abuses among them of an higher nature, with

bv a Divine
point,

particularly

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leading
celebration of the Lord's supper
views to its original institution, and uiferring from
thence the danger of profaning it in the manner they did; (ver.
Being thus naturally, and as it were accidentallv,
17, to the end. J
bro'.giit to take notice again of the corruptions prevailing in he
Coriiithidn church, the apostle makes some remarks upon their
abuse of \\\e spiritual gifts ; observing that they all proceed from
the same sacred agent, and are intended for the edification of the
5ame body, in which all christians are united ; (chap, xii 1
13.)
Inculcating humility in the 'jse of those gifts, and thnt mutual
alFr-ction which the Corinthians needed to be taught, he pursues
th.^ allegory further, and represents Christians as so united m one
nody, as to have entirel}' the same interest; and insists on a
tender care of the least member, from its subserviencv to the
good of the whole, (ver. 15, to the end. J And to engage tUe Corinthians to cultivate love^ as more important than the g;fr3 about
which they contended, he gives a lovely description of that excellent grace, concluding it with a reflection on its perpetual du(chap. xiii.
ration, in which it exceeds even faith and hope
throui^hout.)
After thus inculcating charily and love, a grace
\r hid) they needed much to adorn their Christian profession, and
•liriCt the exercise of their spiritual gifts, the apostle particularly
c luiions them against their prevailing vain ostentation of the gift
of tongues, and reasons with them concerning the absurdity of the
manner in whicii they, some of them at lea^t, abused that gift;
(ci)iip. xiv. 1
And adds, upon the whole, proper motives
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to prevent that abuse
(ver. 20, to the end.)
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Some among the Corinthians doubted, and others denied the
resurrection oj the dead. To prove and establish therefore this
great and peculiar article of the Christian faith, the Apostle Paul
makes some remarks on the certainty and importance of the resurre tion of Christ: (chap, xv 1
II.)
And infers from the resun^ ction of Christ, the certainty of the resurrection of the dead,
nri»iug the importance of this gr^.nd fundamental doctrine of
Ciirisiianity, and mentioning in the series of his argument, that
surrender of the mediatorial kingdom whic!) Christ.it the consummation of all things shall make to the Father ; (ver, 12 34- )
After which he answers objections to the resurrection, drawn frotn
i)ur not being able to conceive of tlie particular manner in which
it shall be effected ; and concludes with urging this doctrine, as
a noble incentive to the greatest readiness, and the warmest zeal
in religion, (ver. 25, to the end,)

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This


This is the connection of the several parts of this excellent epistle, and a sketch of the apostle's design; which was to correct the corruptions and abuses; and answer some queries of the Corinthian church. And though he hath not throughout discussed these two points separately, and with the exactness of systematical method; yet he hath handled his subject in a more natural manner, and given a masterly specimen of the freedom usual in epistolary writings. Before he concludes, he gives some advice to the Corinthian church, relating to the collection proposed to be made for the poor saints in Judea; (chap. xvi. 1—12.) And then closes all, with some particular salutations and directions, with general exhortations to courage and love, a solemn benediction to true Christians, and an awful anathema against those who were destitute of love to our Lord Jesus Christ; (ver. 13. to the end of the epistle.)
A
PARAPHRASE AND NOTES
ON THE
FIRST EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS.

SECTION I.

The Apostle introduces his epistle with a most affectionate and suitable salutation, in which he congratulates the Corinthians on the rich variety of gifts and graces which God had bestowed upon them; and animates their hope of his continued favour in the Lord Jesus Christ, even till the day of his final appearance.

1 Cor. I. 1—5.

1 Cor. I. 1.
PAUL called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ, through the will of God, and Sosthenes, our brother;

2 Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus.

a Called [to be] an apostle.] There is great propriety in every clause of the salutation prefixed to this epistle; and particularly in this, as there were those in the church of Corinth who affected to call the authority of his mission into question.

b Sosthenes.] This was a Corinthian minister who attended Paul in his travels; Compare Acts xviii. 17. It was both humility and prudence in the apostle, thus to join his name with his own, in an epistle in which it was necessary to deal so plainly with them, and to remonstrate against so many irregularities.

Sanctified
Paul, inscribes this epistle to the Corinthians.

Jesus, as well as, called with an external vocation, by which they are separated from the rest of the world, as the saints of God. And when we express our affectionate regard to you, and our good wishes for your edification and comfort, we extend them to all, that in every place invoke the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, whom we and all true Christians, join in acknowledging and adoring as their Lord and ours. May you experimentally know more of the privileges and blessings of his gospel; and for that purpose, grace and peace be with you, that abundance of Divine influence, which may establish your peace and multiply your prosperity; even from God, the original fountain of all blessings, whom we are now taught to look upon as our reconciled and gracious Father, and from Jesus Christ our Lord, that anointed and exalted Saviour, by whom we receive the adoption, and through whose hands all its blessings are communicated to us.

I cannot address you, my dear brethren, without assuring you in the first place, that I always give humble thanks to my God on your account, whenever I mention you before him in prayer, as I frequently do, for the abundant grace of God given unto you in Christ Jesus: by virtue of which you have been received into the Christian church, and are made ornaments to it. For ever adored be his holy name, that in all things ye are enriched in him, with a variety of gifts and graces, and particularly, that ye are made copious in all utterance, and ready, all knowledge, of spiritual and divine things; As the testimony

sect. 1.

1 Cor. L 2.

Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours.

3 Grace be unto you, and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ:

4 I thank my God always on your behalf for the grace of God, which is given you by Jesus Christ:

5 That in every thing ye are enriched by him, in all utterance and in all knowledge.

6 Even as the testimony

Sanctified in Christ Jesus.] I cannot agree with Mr. Locke, in concluding, that this must signify only an external separation to the profession of the true religion, as the Jews were externally a holy people 1 Pet. ii. 9, 10. It seems rather to intimate the persuasion, which he had, that notwithstanding some lamented irregularities among them, which he was faithfully solicitous to reform, they were in the general, a body of sincere Christians, and the exceptions comparatively few.

With all that is in every place, &c.] Nothing could better suit the candid and catholic view which Paul was so much concerned to promote in his epistle, than this declaration of his good wishes for every true Christian upon earth, whether Jew or Gentile, learned or unlearned, Greek or Barbarian. To limit it, as Gratius, L'Enfant, and some others would, to the Christians in Achaia, is to spoil all the strength and beauty of the sentiment. Invoke the name, &c.] This strongly implies, that it might well be taken for granted, that every true Christian would often pray to Christ, as well as address the Father in his name.

That ye are enriched, &c.] These respectful congratulations, and acknowledgements of the things in which they did really excel, had a most happy tendency to soften their minds; and to dispose them the better, to receive the plain reproofs he was going to give them, and which, in their circumstances, faithful love extorted from him.
testimony which I bore to the gospel of Christ, when I abode so long at Corinth, was confirmed among you by such various communications of the Spirit, in consequence of which you became living witnesses of it to all who knew you. So that you are deficient in no gift which can render you useful in his church, while you are waiting for the glorious manifestation of our Lord Jesus Christ, in connection with which, I hope, you will always consider this extraordinary furniture for his service, and improve it so, as to advance your preparation for that day: Still keeping up an humble dependance on him, who, if you faithfully apply to him for the continued communication of his almighty aid, will confirm you to the end; [so that] when so many others shall be condemned, [ye may be] presented blameless and irreproachable, in the great day of our Lord Jesus Christ. Fear not, my brethren, but this blessed day will come, and bring with it those glories which we have so long been taught to expect. Fear not, but Divine grace will still be effectual to bear you through all difficulties in your way to it: for God [is] faithful, by whom you were called into the communion and society of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, that you may participate of the blessings he hath purchased; the grand promises of whose kingdom, we know, refer to that illustrious day of which I have been speaking. Be therefore courageous and cheerful in the assured expectation of it.

IMPROVEMENT.

Let us remember, that we also are sanctified in Christ, and saints by our calling. Though we are not enriched with such extraordinary endowments as those which were bestowed upon this primitive Corinthian church, yet we call on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ; and let it be considered as a band of love to all those who join with us to acknowledge him under the character of their Lord and their Saviour. Let it engage us to pray, that

\* Confirmed among you. As they could not but know they had received these gifts by the hand of Paul, this expression suggests a rational and tender argument, to reduce them to their former affection to him as their spiritual father.

\* [That ye may be] blameless, &c.] I think it would make a very low sense of this, to explain it, as some have done, that they would be preserved, if blameless: the apostle plainly intends to encourage their hope in that grace which might enable them so to persevere, that they might be found blameless.
that the same grace and peace may be with them from God our Father, and from Christ Jesus our common Lord, which we wish for ourselves.

Let our hearts be ever open to such noble sentiments of Christian love; not envying the gifts or endowments of others, but rather rejoicing in them, blessing God for them, and praying that they may be largely increased; that so the testimony of Christ may be confirmed, by the flourishing state of religion among his followers: than which no confirmation will probably carry a stronger and more affecting conviction into the hearts of those who observe it.

To quicken us to this, let us be continually waiting for the revelation of Jesus Christ; thinking seriously, how certainly, and how quickly, he will be revealed from heaven, to bring us, and all our brethren, to an account for the improvement we make of the various favours he hath conferred upon us; of which, surely to be called into the fellowship of Christ, and the participation of spiritual blessings by him, is to be reckoned among the chief.

Let us rejoice in the fidelity of those promises which encourage us to hope, that he whose grace hath called us to a participation of the gospel, will confirm us blameless, even until the day of Christ: and, as we have such prospects of present support and comfort, and of final and complete salvation from him, let us, like this blessed apostle, take a pleasure in sounding forth his name, and in keeping up a most affectionate remembrance of him, even of Jesus Christ our Lord and our Saviour, in our minds, and in those of our Christian brethren.

SECT. II.

The Apostle expresses his great concern on account of the factions in the church of Corinth, of which he had been informed; and expostulates with them, as to the unreasonableness of setting up Christian ministers as heads of parties, when they were under such strong engagements to unite in Christ, as their common Saviour and Master. 1 Cor. i. 10—16.

NOW hasten to the great things, which I have in view in this address to you: and I must first of all beseech, as well as exhort you, my brethren, by the venerable and endearing name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak...
speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and in the same judgment.

11 For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you.

12 Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul and our Lord Jesus Christ, as you desire either to secure his favour, or to advance his cause and interest in the world, that ye all endeavour so far as possible to speak, the same thing, that is, that you do not unnecessarily and unkindly contradict each other, but rather maintain a peaceful unanimous temper; [that] there may be no schisms among you, nor mutual alienation of affection; but [that] ye be all knit together in the same mind, and in the same sentiment; waving unnecessary controversies. debating those which are necessary with temper and candour, and delighting to speak most concerning those great and excellent things in which as Christians you cannot but be agreed, and which, if duly considered, will cement your hearts to each other in the strictest and most tender bonds.

I urge this with the greater earnestness, because it hath been certified to me, my brethren, concerning you, by those of Chloe’s [family,] that there are some contentions among you, which by no means become the relation wherein you stand to each other, and the regard which you profess to the gospel of Christ.

Now this I say and mean by the preceding charge, that, if my information be right, there are among you various parties, which avowedly set themselves up, as under different heads, though you are not yet come to an open separation; so that every one of you lists himself under one or another of those dividing names which are so unhappily used among you on this occasion. One, for instance, says, I am for Paul, admiring the plainness and purity of his doctrine; and a second, I am for Apollos, charmed with the eloquence and beauty of his address; and a third, I am for Cephas, the apostle of the circumcision, who may be well called

* By the venerable and endearing name of the Lord Jesus Christ, This is beautifully and properly opposed to the various human names under which they were so ready to list themselves.

** In the same mind, and in the same sentiment, It was morally impossible, considering the diversity of their educations and capacities, that they should all agree in opinion; nor could he intend that, because he does not urge any argument to reduce them to such an agreement, nor so much as declare, what that one opinion was in which he would have them agree. The words must therefore express that peace and unanimous temper which Christians of different opinions may and ought to maintain towards each other; which will do a much greater honour to the gospel, and to human nature, than the most perfect uniformity that can be imagined.

[The of Chloe’s family,] Grotius supposes Fortunatus and Achaeus, (mentioned chap. xvi. 17,) to have been her sons.
called a foundation-stone in the church, as he maintains so strict a regard to the Mosaic ceremonies, and the peculiar privileges of God's ancient people; while another says, I am for Christ, whose superior name, and strict observance of the Mosaic law in his own person, unanswerably testify its perpetual obligation; however any of his ministers may regard, or neglect it.

13 Give me leave now to ask, Is Christ divided into as many parties as you are split into, so that each has a distinct Saviour? or is he become only the head of one party of his followers, that his name should thus be appropriated by way of distinction, as if it were to exclude all the rest of his disciples from any relation to him? And on the other hand, (not to introduce the name of my honoured and beloved brethren upon this invidious occasion,) was this Paul, whom some of you so much extol crucified for you? Or were you baptized into the name of Paul? that you should thus affect to wear it as a mark of distinction? Since there have been these unhappy divisions in your society, and my name, among others, has been made use of to such a purpose? I thank God, that it so happened in the course of his Providence, that I baptized none of you, except Crispus, once the ruler of the synagogue, and my worthy friend, the hospitable Gaius:

15 Lest any should have a pretence to say, though ever so falsely, that I made the waters of baptism, waters of strife; and had baptized into my own name, or in a view of particular and personal attachment to myself, to the injury of my brethren, or of the Church in general. I remember, that I baptized also the family and I of Apollos, and I of Cephas, and I of Christ.

13 Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?

14 I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius;

15 Lest any should say, that I had baptized in my own name.

16 And I baptized also
family of Stephanas, the first-fruits of Achaia; and I know not whether I baptized any other. And indeed, it might very naturally happen, that I should baptize only these few; for Christ sent me not so much to baptize; which was an office that others of a much inferior rank in the ministry might as well perform; but to preach the gospel, and thereby to bring persons to that faith which would entitle them to this appropriate ordinance of Christianity. And I bless God with all my heart, that I have been enabled to do it with such simplicity, fidelity, and success.

IMPROVEMENT.

While we live in the midst of so much darkness, and continue obnoxious to so many prejudices and errors, it will be absolutely impossible for us, so to speak the same thing, and so perfectly to be joined in the same mind and judgment, as that there should be no diversity of opinion, or expression. But let us labour to obey the apostle’s pathetic exhortation, so far as the imperfection of this mortal state may admit. Let us be intreated in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that venerable, that endeared that sacred name, that there be no schism among us, no mutual hatred or animosity; no uncharitable contentions, no severe censures of each other. And as we desire that there may not, let us take care, that we do not impose upon our brethren indifferent things as necessary; and thereby drive them into a separation for conscience sake; and tempt them, at the same time, by our ill usage, to that bitterness of resentment, which would make them what the mere separation would not, transgressors of this precept; and us partakers in their sins.

On the other hand, let none of us be disposed to dispute merely for the sake of disputing, nor unnecessarily oppose the judgment or
or taste of our brethren, out of an affectation of singularity, or a spirit of contention. But let us rather labour, so far as with a safe conscience we can, to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. And while we do this, if our brethren will exact such submissions from us, as they are not warranted by God to require, and as we cannot in conscience pay, let us follow conscience whithersoever it leads us; taking all necessary care, that it be rightly guided; and if in that circumstance our brethren will cast us out, and say, Let the Lord be glorified; and if to the rest of their unkindness, they will add the farther injury of branding us with the odious names of schismatics, or of heretics; let it be a light thing to us, to be judged of man’s judgment. Let us not render railing for railing, nor injury for injury, but rather, by our meekness, endeavour to overcome their severity; and wait for that happy time, when more of the spirit of knowledge and of charity, shall dispose them to throw down those middle walls of partition, by which the temple of God is straitened and defaced, and the convenience, the symmetry, and grandeur of its original plan, so lamentably spoiled. Above all, let us wait that day, when the secrets of all hearts shall be made manifest; and that world, where they, who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, shall retain no remembrance of the controversies that once divided them; unless it be to balance the alienations of time with the endearments of eternity.

Ver. In the mean while, let us, avoid, as much as possible, a party spirit; and not be fond of listing ourselves under the name of this, or that man, how wise, how good, how great soever. For surely if the names of Peter, and Paul, were in this view to be declined, much more are those, which, in these latter days, have so unhappily crumbled the Christian and Protestant interest, and have given such sad occasion to our enemies to reproach us, Christ is not divided: nor were Luther, or Calvin, or even Peter, or Paul, crucified for us; nor were we baptized into any of their names.

Happy shall that disciple of our compassionate Lord be, whom he shall most evidently own in healing the breaches which the artifices of the temper, too often abetted by the infirmities of Christ’s faithful servants, have already made in the Church, and which the great enemy is continually endeavouring to multiply, and to widen! Happy he, who reverencing and loving his Master’s image wherever he sees it, shall teach others to do so too! And who being himself an example of yielding, so far as he conscientiously can, and of not taking upon him to censure others, where he cannot yield to them, shall do his part towards cementing, in the bonds of holy love, all the children of God, and the members
members of Christ! How unsuccessful soever his efforts may be, amidst that angry and contentious, that ignorant and bigotted crowd, who mis-call themselves Christians; or by whatever suspicious and reproachful names his moderation may be stigmatized; his Divine Master will neither fail to consider it in its true view, nor to honour it with proportionable tokens of his acceptance and favour. Love is the first and greatest of his commands; and after all the clamour that has been made about notions and forms, he who practises and teaches love best, shall be greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

SECT. III.

The Apostle, knowing that a fond regard to eloquence and philosophy, to which some of their teachers made high pretensions, was one great occasion of their divisions, sets himself to shew how little stress was to be laid upon them, which he illustrates by the choice which God had made of gospel-preachers quite destitute of those accomplishments. 1 Cor. I. 17, to the end.

1 Cor. I. 17.

FOR Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel; not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect.

1 CORINTHIANS I. 17.

I just now told you that Christ did not send me to baptize, as my principal business, but rather to preach the gospel; and now I must add, that in the commission which I had the honour to receive from him, he did not instruct me to preach it with those philosophical niceties of expression, or laboured rhetoric, which many are so ready to esteem as the wisdom of words; lest if I had attended to these little things, the cross of Christ should have been deprived of its just honours, and so have been enervated, and rendered vain. For this must have been the natural

* Baptize, but to preach.] As I knew not how to avoid the repetition of this clause, without prolonging the former section beyond due bounds, or making an improper division; I hope the reader will excuse it and a few other instances of this kind which will occur.

* Should have been enervated, or rendered vain.] If the doctrine of the crucifixion of the Son of God for the sins of men be indeed true, it is undoubtedly a truth of the highest importance, and it might reasonably be expected, that a person who had been instructed in it by such extraordinary methods, should appear to lay the main stress of his preaching upon it. The design of this wonderful dispensation might therefore have been in a great measure frustrated, if it had been the care of the first preachers of it, and particularly of Paul, to study a vain parade of words, and to set off their discourses with those glittering ornaments which the Grecian orators so often sought; and which the Corinthians were so ready to adopt. But amidst all the beautiful simplicity which a deep conviction of the gospel tended to produce, there was room left for the most manly
natural consequence, when men saw one who pretended to know so much, and to have received such extraordinary discoveries of the gospel, and of Christ crucified as its great foundation, seeming not so much to trust to the grand important facts he averred, as to artificial reasonings, or ornaments of speech, in his manner of representing them to the world.

18 I might well be cautious on this head; for the doctrine of the cross is indeed folly, with respect to the judgment of them that are perishing; to wretched creatures, who are in the way to be for ever undone. They, in that fatal madness, which leads them to speedy ruin, think it a ridiculous and mean thing, to expect salvation from one who seemed unable to save himself; and glory from one that expired in ignominy. But to us who are saved from the contagion of so wicked an age, and are in the way to everlasting lasting, it is a most illustrious display of the power of God, to the noblest purposes our minds can conceive. For it is written, and the words are remarkably applicable to this great event, (Isa. xxix. 14.) I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and abolish the sagacity of the prudent; thus hath God, by this dispensation, poured confusion on human wit and learning, closing quence and philosophy: So that, in allusion to other words of the same prophet, we may say, (Isa. xxxiii. 18,) Where is the celebrated sage, whose wise counsel and penetrating genius have been held in greatest esteem? Where the learned scribe? Where the ostentatious disputers of this world, who hath been most admi-

19 For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent.

20 Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputers of this world? hath

18 For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish, foolishness; but unto us which are saved, it is the power of God.
For God hath made the wisdom of this world foolish,

21 For after that, in the wisdom of God; the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.

22 For the Jews require that these three words refer to three orders of learned men among the Jews—the natural philosopher, and the literal, and the allegorical interpreter of scripture; I rather think the apostle meant to include persons most eminent for their learning and sagacity, whether among Jews or Gentile. The sages of the latter, and scribes of the former, are well known; and the disputers of the age may include such of both, as, proud of their natural sagacity, were fond of engaging in controversies, and fancied they could confute every adversary. If, as Mr. Locke supposes, the chief leader of the faction against St. Paul, (whom that learned and ingenious writer stiles the false apostles,) called himself a scribe, there will be a peculiar propriety in the use of the word here; but without that supposition, it might easily be understood by the Corinthians, who had so considerable a synagogue of Jews among them.

e The Jews demand a sign, &c. When we consider how many miracles were continually wrought by, and upon the first preachers and converts of Christianity, this may seem an astonishing demand! but from a memorable passage in Josephus in which he speaks of an impostor, promising his followers to shew them a sign of their being set at liberty from the Roman yoke, compared with their requiring from Christ, amidst their full torrent of his miracles, a sign from heaven; I am led to conclude, that the sense given in the paraphrase is the genuine interpretation of this much controverted passage.
By the preaching of salvation through Christ crucified:

23 But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness;

24 But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.

25 Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

See the paraphrase and note on Mat. xii. 38, Vol. I. p. 330; and Mat. xvi. 1, p. 456.

[To the Jews indeed a stumbling-block.] It is well known, that nothing exposed Christianity more to the contempt of the Jews than the doctrine of the cross, they therefore called Christ in derision, Ἰησοῦς οὗ τὸν ἁγιασμένον, that is, on the cross; and Christians, Ἰησοῦς οὗ τὴν οἰκοδομήν ἀποκάλεσαν, the disciples of the crucified master; and by a paronomasia, or malignant playing on the word, they called, ὑπέρτων, ὑπερτάτης, as in gen, a revelation of vanity. See Leish's Critica Sacra in loc.

[To the Greeks foolishness. It is well known how profanely Lucian insults the Christians, on worshipping a crucified impostor, and many of the fathers speak of the same reproach. Archbishop Tillotson appears to have given credit to the charge brought against the Jesuits, who to avoid the like offence of the Chinese, denied that Christ was crucified, and represented it, as an invention of the Jews to asperse Christianity. Tillotson's Works, Vol. II. p. 284.

The folly of God, &c.] As it is absolutely impossible that there should be either folly or weakness in God, so it is certain that the world did not in general believe that there was; and consequently those strong phrases must be used in a very peculiar sense, and must mean that scheme, which was really his, though the world, for want of understanding it, represented it as weakness and folly unworthy of God.
all the efforts which men can make, either to reform the world any other way, or to obstruct the prevalency and success of this, and this is the necessary consequence of its being indeed Divine.

And for the farther illustration of this thought, let me call you to behold, and seriously to contemplate your calling, brethren; consider the state of your fellow-Christians in general, and even of those who are employed as ministers of the gospel, and you will perceive [there are] not many wise according to the flesh, according to those maxims which a sensual world governs itself by, in its principles of secular policy; there are not many mighty heroes renowned for their martial courage, there are not many of noble birth and illustrious rank among men to be found on their list. But God hath chosen those that are reputed the foolish things of the world, that he may shame the wise men of whom it is most ready to boast; and the weak things of the world, who pretend to no extraordinary strength or valour, hath God chosen, that he may, by their heroic patience under the severest sufferings, shame its mighty things which have never been able with all their boasted fierceness, to equal that meek fortitude with which we trace the footsteps of the Lamb of God; And ignoble things of the world hath God chosen, and things most commonly and scornfully set at nought among men; yea, and things which are not in the least regarded, but overlooked as if they had no being, and were below contempt itself, hath God chosen, that he may abolish and annihilate things that are in the highest esteem, and make the most illustrious figure among the children of men; That his great end of humbling us might be more effectually secured, and that no flesh might boast of any advantages or distinctions in his presence.

1 Your calling.] L'Enfant renders it, those among you, who are called, which, with many other passages in this version, retains the sense, but departs from the exactness of St. Paul's expression.

2 Things set at nought.] Accordable to this, the Danish missionaries tell us, that most of the Malabarian converts were the poorest of the people; the poets and wise, who valued themselves upon their genius, learning, and politeness, despising the gospel, and doing their utmost to oppose its progress. See Nitzsch's excellent history of this important mission.

3 Things which are not.] Dr. Whitby shews here, how well this represents the supreme contempt in which the Jews held the Gentiles. Compare Deut. xxii. 21; Isa. xli. 17.

Wisdom.
Reflections on the wisdom of God being despised by the world.

sence. For on the whole, all we have that is worth mentioning, we receive from Christ; and we receive it from him as the gift of God, since it is of him, and his free mercy and grace, that ye are called to share in the blessings given by Christ Jesus his Son. He exhibits this blessed Saviour to us, and disposes our hearts to accept of him, who, amidst our ignorance and folly, is made of God unto us a source of wisdom and through him, guilty as we are, we receive righteousness; polluted as we are, we obtain sanctification; and inslaved as we generally are to the power of our lusts, and the dominion of Satan, we obtain by him complete redemption. So that we may now indeed boast of our happy change, in whatever point of light it be considered; but it is a boast not of insolent presumption, but humble gratitude; as it is written, (Jer. ix. 23, 24; Isa. lxv. 15) “He that boasteth, let him boast in the Lord, and in this, that he knoweth who exercise loving kindness, judgment and righteousness in the earth.”

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. May Divine grace form the taste of ministers, and their hearers,

17 more to this doctrine of Christ crucified! May he every where be preached; and that be accounted the truest wisdom of words by which his cross may become most efficacious. There cannot be surely a more evident demonstration of folly, or a more dreadful token of approaching ruin, than despising the wisdom of God and the power of God. If we are ever shaken by that contempt for the gospel, which so many are continually ready in our age to express, let us recollect what glorious effects it hath produced; whilst, in the midst of such illustrations of the wisdom of God,

21 the world by all its wisdom knew not its Maker; how many believers have been saved, how many by believing are daily brought into the way of salvation? In this view let us triumphantly say,

20 Where is the wise, the scribe, the disputer of this world; what has wisdom, learning, disputation done, in comparison of what the plain and simple doctrine of a crucified Saviour has wrought, and is continually working? Let us earnestly pray, that God would, by the power of his grace, disperse the prejudices of men; that the Jews may not so demand a sign, as that Christ crucified should be

Wisdom, righteousness, &c.] Bos would render the words, for of him, (in Christ Jesus, who is made of God unto us wisdom, ye are righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, that is, completely justified, sanctified, and redeemed.

The
He had preached in the demonstration of the Spirit, stumbling block to them, nor the most learned of the Gentiles so seek after science, as that the wisdom of God should seem foolishness to them; but that both might join in feeling, and owning, how Ver. Divinely wise, and how Divinely powerful, the dispensation of the 24 gospel is.

Let us not be offended with our calling, though so few of the 26 wise, the mighty, and the noble, partake of its benefits. If God hath chosen the weak things, they shall confound the mighty; and the foolish, they shall shame the wise. Never shall we find ourselves truly happy, till we come to feel that we are naturally foolish and guilty, polluted and enslaved; and that our wisdom and righteousness, our sanctification and redemption, are in Christ, who is made unto us of God all this, and indeed all in all. Then shall we know, and not till then, what true glory means, even when we can abase ourselves to the dust in his presence, and have learned only to glory in the Lord.

SECT. IV.

The Apostle further illustrates the reasons for which he had declined all ostentation of eloquence; when he came among the Corinthians; and particularly insists on the extraordinary nature of the facts and doctrines he was to teach; which were of a much higher original than any discoveries which human wit or learning could make, and were to be traced up to the immediate teachings of the Holy Spirit: their nature being so wonderful, that it was difficult for the corrupted minds of men to receive them, even when they were taught. 1 Cor. II. 1, to the end.

1 Cor. II. 1.

AND I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God.

1 Corinthians II. 1.

I HAVE observed that the design of God in the gospel is of a very humbling nature, admirably calculated to stain the pride of human glory, and bring men to boast in him alone. And with truth and pleasure, I can say to you, my brethren, that in perfect harmony with this wise and excellent scheme, when I first came among you, I came not with the pomp of language, or worldly wisdom, with the laboured charms of eloquence, or philosophy; for I remembered, that

a The pomp of language.] This certainly alludes to the vain affectation of sublimity and subtilty so common among the Greeks of that age, and very remote from the true eloquence in which (as was observed above) our apostle did so remarkably excel. L'Enfant thinks, he refers to his not being perfectly master of the Greek language in all its purity and elegance with which the Corinthians spoke it; but I prefer the former sense, as more suitable to the original.
That their faith might depend on the power of God.

that I was declaring to you no human invention, which needed or admitted such ornaments or recommendations, but was exhibiting the testimony of God to a plain fact, for which I produced authentic evidence by visible Divine operations. I therefore endeavoured to exhibit it in as intelligible a way as I could, and treated it as one who believed that it really came from God, and so needed not the varnishing of human art. For I was previously determined in my mind, that fond as I knew you were of refined speculation, and polite address, I would appear to know, and employ myself to make known, nothing among you, but Jesus as the Christ, the great promised Messiah of the Jews, even that crucified person, against whom so many scandals are raised. Yet did I resolve steadily to maintain the doctrine of his cross, and endeavour to exalt its honours wherever I came, not excepting your opulent and polite city. And to this plan you know I resolutely adhered, though I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling; for I knew I had enemies about me on every side, (Acts xviii. 6, 9.) and laboured under natural disadvantages, (2 Cor. x. 10.) and the force of the prejudice which I had to encounter was strong. And you well know, that my speech in private, and my preaching in public, was not in the persuasive discourses of human wisdom, eloquence or philosophy, nor with that pomp and sophistry of argument which the learned men of the world are so ready to affect. But far from being contemptible on that account, it had other much nobler recommendations: for it was in the demonstration of the Spirit, and of power, by the most convincing evidence, arising, both from the prophecies of the old Testament inspired by the Holy Ghost, and

b Appear to know.] In that sense, the word γνωρίζω, is used by Pindar, (Olym. xiii.) and it is most natural to give it that signification here.

c Among you.] There seems a peculiar emphasis in this expression; as if the apostle had said, I did not change my usual method at Corinth, and you know with what glorious success it was attended.

d From that crucified person: you know crucified.] The Jews and heathens probably gave Christ this name by way of contempt; but St. Paul declares, that instead of concealing this as an infamy and scandal, it was the main thing he insisted upon; as indeed all the most important doctrines of the gospel stand in a close and natural connection with it. And no doubt but he took them in that connection; for he refers in the course of these epistles, to several doctrines relating to the Father, and the Holy Spirit, as what he had taught them, though not expressly included in the doctrine of the crucifixion.

2 For I determined not to know any thing among you save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.

3 And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling:

4 And my speech, and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit, and of power:

f Politicians...
5 That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.

6 Howbeit, we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought.

7 But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory:

and from the miraculous energy which he hath exerted in and by the apostles, and other ministers of the New. And on this I laid the whole stress; that your faith should not depend on the wisdom, reason, or address of men; but on the power of God, a much surer foundation, which shews how little reason you have to value yourselves on any appearance of the former.

Nevertheless, though we want what is commonly called human wisdom, yet we speak the truest and most excellent wisdom among those who are perfect: and if I may so express it, completely initiated into these Divine mysteries; such well instructed and experienced souls will bear witness to its incomparable excellence. But we speak not the wisdom of this world, nor of the rulers of this world: nor that which is admired and sought by the great politicians of the age, whether Jews or Gentiles, who nevertheless shall, soon be brought down and abolished, shall find difficult and dreadful scenes arising, in which all their boasted sagacity and penetration will be of no avail. But we, taught of God to despise the transient vanities which delude them, speak what must be infinitely more worthy your most attentive consideration and regard: for it is the wisdom of God himself in a mystery: that mysterious wisdom, which was long hidden and entirely unknown, and now appears to contain wonders which no understanding of man or angel can fully penetrate; even that wisdom which God from eternal ages pre-determined in the secret of his own all-comprehending mind, for

1 Politicians of the age, &c.] Mr. Locke insists upon it, as an observation of great importance, that which generally signifies the Jewish economy; and supposes that the apostle here also aims a silent stroke at the Jewish teacher that set himself up in opposition to him, and refers to the approaching destruction of the Jews by the Romans. And Mr. L'Enfant agrees with this, only explaining it of the learned rabbis of their synagogues. But as the Jewish magistrates, or scribes, were not the only princes in crucifying Christ, (compare Acts iv. 27,) and as the word away, has sometimes undoubtedly a more extensive signification, (compare Rom. viii. 2; Gal. i. 4; Eph. ii. 2; chap. vi. 12; 2 Tim. iv. 10; Tit. ii. 12;) and even in this epistle, chap. iii. 18, and the next chapter, iv. 4;) and as St. Paul's observation here may so well be applied to Gentile, as well as Jewish princes, I saw no reason for limiting the sense, which I never choose to do, without some apparent necessity. On the same principle, I have receded from Mr. Locke's interpretation of the next verse.

2 From eternal ages.] To what I have just said of my reasons for not interpreting this of the time of setting up the Jewish economy, I must add, that it signifies little, to endeavour to bring such expressions down to any period of time. If it be granted, that they intend any thing previous to the existence of those to whom they refer, the same difficulties will still lie in the way; nor is it possible to avoid them.
Not according to the spirit of the world, but of God,

4. for the great purposes of our final salvation and glory. A wisdom this, which none of the Jewish rulers of this our age, or of the heathen that were concerned in it, knew; for if they had indeed known [it] they would not by any means have presumed to have crucified one so greatly their superior, as the Lord of glory; wicked as they were, they would for their own sakes have been afraid to attack the Son of God, his long promised Messiah, had they been thoroughly apprized of his high character and dignity. But [this is] as it is written, (Isa. Lxv. 4,) when the prophet, speaking of the blessings of the Messiah's kingdom, says, Eye hath not seen, neither hath ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, what glorious things God hath prepared for them that love him. Nor had the generality of mankind, or even the people who enjoyed the benefit of the Jewish scripture, any just conception of the nature of this sublime plan, and the method by which it was to be accomplished. But God hath revealed [them] to us Christians, and especially to us his apostles, by the extraordinary inspiration of his Spirit, who intimately and fully knows them: for the Spirit searcheth and penetrates all things, even the deep things of God, the profoundest mysteries of his counsels, and his gospel. (Compare Rom. xvi. 25: Eph. i. 9; chap. iii. 3, 5, 7.) And well may we be acquainted with all these things; for who of mankind knoweth the things of a man, the secret recesses of mind, on many occasions, and in many circumstances, unless it be the spirit of a man which is in him, which knows it by consciousness, to a degree of certainty which no observer

8 Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

9 But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.

10 But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.

11 For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man, which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.

b Our final salvation and glory.] L'Enfant explains this, of the glory of the apostles, in being appointed to publish this revelation, but the sense we have given equally suits the phrase, and is much more sublime and important.

1 Not by any means.] We ex, is an expression which seems to have this force. Compare Luke xxiii. 34.

k As it is written, &c.] The context in Isa. lxiv. may well be explained, to express the Church's earnest desire of the manifestation of the glories of the Messiah's kingdom; and I think it more probable, that this is a quotation of those words, with some little variation, than that it refers to a passage said to have been found in an apocryphal book ascribed to Elijah, (which probably was a forgery of much later date than this time,) where these words are indeed extant, being perhaps transcribed from St. Paul.

l The spirit of a man.] I do not apprehend that the distinction between the soul and spirit, to which some refer these words, is of great importance in the interpretation of them. They must signify the perfect acquaintance with all the Divine schemes and purposes which the Holy Spirit has, and which the apostle's argument directly proves, that no creature can have: so that it seems a glorious proof of the Deity of the Spirit, and has accordingly been urged as such, by all who have defended that important doctrine.

m These...
observation or reasoning can produce in another; so also no one knoweth the things of God, but the Spirit of God himself, who is intimately conscious of all, and can conceal, or discover, whatever he pleases.

Now this is entirely to the present purpose; for the spirit, which we have received, is not that of the world, nor do we govern ourselves by those carnal views which engross and enslave so great a part of mankind; but we have received in large and liberal supplies, that Spirit which is from God, and which is the noblest of his gifts to the children of men, by which their minds are both informed and regulated; that so we might both notionally and experimentally know the things which are freely given us by God: Which we also make it our business to speak, and to communicate to others, not in words dictated by human wisdom, to excite men's curiosity, amuse their imaginations, or gain their applause; but in those dictated by the Holy Spirit; and consequently best adapted to convey such ideas as he would impart, and to impress the hearts and consciences of men, with a reverent and deep sense of those holy mysteries: and this we do with all serious care and attention, explaining such spiritual and sublime things by spiritual words, suggested by him as best adapted to them. But in the mean time, vain and foolish men find a great deal in our preaching to cavil at, and object against. And it is no wonder they do; for the animal man, who continues under the influence of his appetites and passions, and is a stranger to the noble exercises and principles of the Divine life, receiveth not, with any inward relish or sense, the things of the Spirit of God, which are too sublime and refined for his low, corrupted and degenerate taste, for in proportion to the degree

12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.

13 Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth, comparing spiritual things with spiritual.

14 But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him: neither can they be known by him, because they are spiritually discerned.

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m These dictated by the Holy Spirit.] This expression may certainly convince us, of the great regard which we ought always to maintain to the words of scripture; and may especially teach ministers how attentively they should study its beauties, and how careful they should be to make it the support of their discourses.

n Explaining spiritual things, &c.] This sense of συγκαταθη = occurs, Gen. xi. 8; and Numb. xv. 34, in the Seventy.

o The animal man.] Without examining all that the learned and judicious Dr. Owen hath said one way on this text, or Dr. Claget, and Dr. Stebbing on another, I have taken that which seems to me the due medium, and for the farther vindication of this exposition, must refer to Clifford, in the 2d volume of the Phoenix, p. 544, and to my third letter to the Author of Christianity not founded on Argument, only reminding my reader, that this very word ἀγνοεῖν is rendered unsculat, Jam. iii. 12: Jude, ver. 19.
The apostles have the mind of Christ.

in which they are full of Divine wisdom, they will appear foolishness to him; neither can he rightly know them, whilst he continues in his present state, and under such unhappy prejudices as these, for they are spiritually discerned, and a man must have a spiritual taste, formed by the influences of the Holy Spirit upon his heart, before he will thoroughly enter into their excellence. But the spiritual man, whose heart, illuminated and sanctified by the Divine Spirit, is set on spiritual and noble objects, discerneth all things about him rightly, while he himself is discerned by no man; by none of those who are most forward and heady in their censures; but remains like a man endowed with sight, among those born blind, who are incapable of apprehending what is clear to him, and amidst their own darkness cannot participate of, nor understand those beautiful ideas and pleasing sensations which light pours upon him.

And surely, if you consider matters aright, you cannot much wonder at this. For who hath known the mind of the Lord, or who hath instructed him? There must undoubtedly be in the Divine counsels, many secret and hidden things, and a man must have a mind, capacious as that of the blessed God himself; to take upon him to judge of his schemes, and arraign his conduct. But we, even I Paul, and my brother apostles have the mind of Christ, who is the incarnate wisdom of God himself; and therefore we are not to be called to the bar of those who arrogantly pretend, merely on the foot of human reason, to censure us, as some of your presumptuous teachers do, to their own shame, and the detriment of those that hearken to their suggestions.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. Let it be the resolution of every Christian, and especially the determination of every minister, with St. Paul, to know nothing but

15 But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man.

16 For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ.
Reflections on the preaching of Christ by the power of God.

but Jesus Christ, even him that was crucified: to esteem this the most important of all knowledge, to cultivate it in their own minds, and endeavour to propagate it to others. With this Divine science, shall those ministers of the gospel, who know least of the excellency of speech and the enticing words of man's wisdom, do more important things for the reformation of the world, and the salvation of souls, than without it, the greatest masters of language, or adepts in philosophy, will ever be able to effect. Let the princes of this world boast of the knowledge and refined policy which is so soon to perish, by which so many of their subjects perish, and sometimes themselves before their time. In how many instances does it leave them to imitate the destructive maxims of those, who, under pretence of public good, but really under the instigation of the basest private passions, crucified Jesus, the ador-nable Saviour, the Lord of glory.

May God teach us more of that hidden wisdom which they who are truly initiated into real Christianity know, and which opens upon us views and hopes, beyond what eye hath seen, or ear heard, or it hath particularly and fully entered into the heart of man to conceive. There is no need we should distinctively conceive it. It is enough that we know in the general, it is what God hath prepared for them that love him; which consideration may surely teach us to trample under our feet that which he so often bestows on them who hate him, and are abhorred by him; on those with whom he is angry every day.

May that Spirit, which searcheth all things, even the hidden things of God, give us more deeply and affectionately to know the things which are freely given us of God, and to adore that free grace from which we receive them! These things we learn with the highest advantage from the holy scriptures, where they are delivered in words which the Holy Ghost taught: in words therefore, the most admirably adapted to express those spiritual and sublime ideas they were intended to communicate: In which words consequently, we learn to speak of the things of God with the exactest propriety, and the truest edification.

May we be enabled spiritually to discern them, with whatever contempt they may be treated by natural, that is, by animal men; by those, who, though conceited of their rational powers, can relish little or nothing but what relates to this low and sensual life. Conscious of that inward discerning, which discovers all things to us in their true light, even things of infinite importance, may we pity that undiscerning rashness of blind arrogance and pride, with which some, who think themselves the wisest in proportion to the degree in which they are the most wretched of mankind, may treat us, and not only us, but that gospel which is our glory and our joy.
Paul could not speak to the Corinthians, but as to babes in Christ.

 Sect. IV.

joy. We have the mind of Christ delivered to us by his holy apostles, who were intimately and miraculously instructed in it.

Let us humbly receive the oracles they deliver; and whilst others are presuming haughtily to censure them, may we think ourselves happy, if, with meek subjection to their unerring authority, we may sit at the feet of such teachers, and regulate our lives by their instructions!

Sect. V.

The Apostle reproves the carnality of the Corinthians, in contending about human teachers, and urges many important considerations to cure them of so unbecoming a temper. 1 Cor. III. 1—9.

1 Corinthians III. 1.

I have been speaking of that great plainness with which I addressed myself to you when I came to preach the gospel among you at Corinth; and I hope, my brethren, you will not despise me for it: for truly, as it became my character as an apostle of Christ, so it suited yours; as being under the power of prejudices, which so far prevailed, that even when you were converted to the profession of Christianity, I could not speak unto you as unto spiritual persons; who had made any attainments in religion proportionable to the illuminations and influences of the Spirit, which you had received: but was obliged in many instances to address you, as those who were still in too great a measure, carnal in your temper and views, and therefore were but as babes in Christ, and beginners in the Divine life. I might have said sublimer things, and in a more elevated manner; but found so much pride and faction among you, that it was necessary to insist much upon the plain and fundamental doctrines of the cross; rather than on things, which, if they might have suited your inclinations better, would have suited your circumstances less. I was forced to preach to you, as to persons weak as infants; and so feed you with milk, which I did as it were.

A Babes in Christ.] By explaining this of beginners in the Divine life, or such as had made but little proficiency in it, we reconcile this with those passages which speak of the eminency of their gifts, 1 Cor. i. 5; 2 Cor. viii. 7.

1 I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto

2 I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto

The word translated exactly signifies, I gave you to drink; but as that rendering would not suit the other word with which it is connected, strong meat, I thought it best to retain our version. Parallel instances to this manner of
He tells them of their envying, strife, &c.

1 Cor. III. 2.

3 For ye are yet carnal; for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal; and walk as men?

4 For while one saith, I am of Paul, and another, I am of Apollos, are ye not carnal?

5 Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the expression are produced by Mr. Black-"East," in his Sacred Classics, Vol. I. p. 72.

c Ornaments of discourse.] If any think that the use of them might have been a proper condensation to their weakness, it is to be remembered, that the emulation of eloquence so ready to prevail among them, might have rendered such an indulgence dangerous.

d I for Apollos.] Mr. Locke fancy's, (comparing chap. iv. 6) that by Apollos, Paul means that Jewish teacher who was set up in opposition to him, and came among them, after he had preached the gospel to them; but it seems much more probable to me, especially from the text just referred to, that he chose this name, that he might give no offence, and to show that he should lament and condemn any division among them, though it were in favour of himself, or the dearest friend he had in the world. I cannot think St. Paul would have described the false apostle, if there were any one person who might be so called, as watering his plantation, which he rather wasted, or have spoken of himself, and that messenger of Satan, as one; as he does verse 3.

Vol. III.

O 6
1 Cor. iii. 5.

6 I have planted; Apollos watered: but God gave the increase.

7 So then, neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase.

8 Now he that planteth, and he that watereth, are one: and every man shall receive his own reward, according to his own labour.

9 For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building.

*Ae one.] This is, (as Mr. Cudworth well observes, in his _Apost. Hist._ p. 156,) another cogent argument against decisions; that, though their labours were different, and their rewards proportionable, yet they had in the general one office, and were employed as workers together by God, to plant the seeds of grace and holiness in the souls of men, and to bring them on to perfection. He here introduces, an excellent discourse, of the happy consequences of faithfulness in the ministerial work, and the awful account of it to be given up to God. A subject familiar to his own mind; and so proper for their teachers, that if it render the apostle something less regular, it balances the account by rendering it much more useful.

*The fellow-labourers of God.] This is the exact import of συνεργοί Θεός, which our version renders, labourers together with God; an improper rendering on every account.
Reflections on our attachment to human names and parties.

that ye may bring forth fruit for him. [Ye are the building of God, which we are to endeavour to advance; that he may dwell in you, as in his holy temple, and glorify his name among you.

IMPROVEMENT.

Who that wishes the welfare of the church of Christ, must not lament those sad remainders of carnality which are often to be found among them who have the greatest advantage for becoming spiritual; while the same contentious principles, fermented, no doubt, by the same malignant enemy of the whole body, breathe in so many of its members, and diffuse a kind of poison, which at once swells and torments it? What envyings, and strife, and factions, among those who ought to join as brethren, and to know but one interest! What a desire in many instances, to increase the burdens of each other, instead of bearing them with friendly sympathy!

May Christians be cured of this dishonourable and fatal attachment to distinguished parties, and human names! May ministers feel more of that generous and noble spirit which this great apostle expresses! His reasoning hath the same force still. Ministers are still intended to be only the instruments of producing and establishing faith in their hearers, and still depend, as entirely as ever, upon the blessing of God to give the increase to their labours. To that, may they daily look; and be sensible that they are nothing without it; and that with it, their part is so small that they hardly deserve to be mentioned. May their hands and hearts be more united; and retaining a due sense of the honour which God doth them, in employing them in his vineyard, and in his building, may they faithfully labour, not for themselves, but for the great Proprietor, and till the day come, when he will remember them in full proportion to their fidelity and diligence.
SECT. VI.

As a useful lesson both to teachers and private Christians, in the present state of the Corinthian church, the Apostle reminds them of that great trial which every man's work was to undergo, the great guilt of defiling God's temple, the vanity of human wisdom, in the sight of God, and the great happiness of the true believer in that universal grant which God had made him of every thing necessary to his welfare. 1 Cor. III. 10, to the end.

1 CORINTHIANS III. 10.

I HAVE spoken of you as God's building; and in that view, have the pleasure to say, that in my first preaching amongst you, when you were entire strangers to the first principles of the gospel, according to the measure of the grace of God given to me; to which I desire to refer the honour of all that I am, and of all that I do, in this excellent work: I have been enabled to act in the character of a skilful architect, or master-builder: for with all due care and application, HAVE I laid the great foundation, which hath strength sufficient to bear all the stress even of our eternal hopes. And one, and another, whom God calls to labour amongst you, buildeth thereon, for the further edification of your church, and of the souls of its particular members: but let every one carefully see to it, how he buildeth thereon, and what superstructure he raises. This is all indeed that remains to be done: for other solid foundation no one is able to lay, beside what is already laid, which is Jesus Christ, the great foundation-stone, which God hath laid in Zion, elect and precious; and I take it for granted, no one who calls himself a Christian will attempt to lay any other. If any man build, I say, upon this foundation, let him look to the materials and nature of his work; whether he raise a stately and magnificent temple upon it, adorned as it were, like the house of God at Jerusalem, with gold and silver [and] large, beautiful, and costly stones; or a mean hovel, consisting of nothing better than planks of wood, roughly put together, and thatched with hay.

11 For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

12 Now if any man build upon this foundation, gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble:

Which is Jesus Christ.] L'Enfant would render it, even this, that Jesus is the Christ; but I think the sense given in our text much nobler.

[a] The
hay [and] stubble; that is, let him look to it, whether he teach the substantial vital truths which do indeed belong to Christianity, and which it was intended to support and illustrate; or set himself to propagate vain subtleties and conceits on the one hand, or legal rights and Jewish traditions on the other; which, though they do not absolutely destroy the foundation disgrace it as a mean edifice would do a grand and expensive foundation, laid with great pomp and solemnity. But to prevent this, let me seriously admonish you, that whatever any man’s work may be, and however it may be covered, and as it were hid behind the scaffolding, every one’s work shall ere long be made manifest. For the great day, which is approaching, shall lay it open because it shall then be as it were discovered by fire; yea, the fire of that great day of general conflagration, when the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, shall prove every man’s work, of what kind it is. It shall stand a severe examination, which will as soon expose the vanity of many things, which some admired preachers value themselves upon, and for which they are extolled by their hearers, as the flame of some mighty burning shews the difference between the stability of a straw roof and a marble wall. And then if any man’s superstructure abide the test, and be approved he will not only have the comfort of it in his own mind, which is an immediate and permanent satisfaction; but he shall also receive a glorious reward from Christ, the great Head of the church, and Proprietor of the building, in comparison of which the applauses of men, or any thing they can bestow, deserve not to be mentioned by the name of a reward. But if any man’s work be then burnt up; if on that trial it be found like the combustible and mean materials which I represented by the wood, the hay, and the stubble; the consequence is, that he will sustain a proportionable loss. He will find

b The day shall prove every man’s work.] It is so very unnatural, with Dr. Whitby to interpret this of the time of the destruction of Jerusalem, or of any approaching persecutions of the christian church, that one cannot but wonder, that critics of character should have adopted such a sense.

c Sustain a proportionable loss.] I cannot but fear, that an application to such niceties of unprofitable learning, as those in which some, who have the charge of souls, spend almost the whole of their time, to the neglect of the vitals of Christianity, will be found in this day, last la-

B 3
he has been spending his time and strength to little purpose, and has lost a great deal of that reward which he might through Divine grace, have secured, had he applied himself with vigour and zeal to the proper labours of a gospel-minister. Yet, if he be upon the whole a good man, who hath built upon Christ as the foundation, and on the terms of the gospel, committed his soul to him, he shall himself be saved, and find mercy of the Lord; though in comparison with that more abundant entrance into his kingdom which others will have, it may be said, that he is saved with extreme difficulty, and as a man whose house is in flames while he is in it, and who is therefore forced with great terror to escape through the fire, sustaining the loss of every thing but his life.

16 Again, before I dismiss this topic of your being the building of God, let me lead you into some farther reflections, and ask you seriously, Know ye not that ye are the temple of God? that the whole body of Christian converts is dedicated to his peculiar service, and honoured by his most gracious presence, as the Spirit of God dwelleth in you and you thereby appear to be saved; yet so, as by fire.

16 Know ye not, that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?
If any man defile his temple, God will destroy him.

17. If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.

18. Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise.

19. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, He taketh the wise in their own craftiness.

20. And again, The Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain.
Christians belong to Christ, and all things are theirs.

Therefore, upon the whole, that I may return to the point from whence I set out, considering all I have said, and especially considering in what view the great God regards these things which we are so ready to value ourselves upon; let none glory in men, or divide themselves into parties, out of attachment to this or that teacher. For all things are yours, and we in particular, are to be regarded, not as your lords and commanders, that you should list under our banners; but rather as your servants. I except not myself, or the most honoured among my brethren; whether Paul or Apollos, or Cephas, be in question, we are all equally yours, to serve you to the utmost of our abilities, in the advancement of your best interests. Yea, I may go farther, and say, whether we speak of the world, God will give you so much of it as shall be for your real good; and indeed he supports its whole frame in a great measure for your sakes; or if we survey life in all its various conditions, or death, and all its solemn harbingers and attendants, God will make the one, or the other in different views advantageous to you, and will adjust the circumstances of both with the kindest regard to your happiness. Things present, or future, the comforts and privileges of this life on the one hand, or its afflictions and troubles on the other, and at length, the boundless felicity of the eternal state, where affliction and trouble shall be no more known; all are, through the Divine grace, yours. Remember this, and let the thought raise your minds above these little things which now occasion such contention between you; and be united in love, as God hath united you in privileges and hopes. And bear in mind too as the counterpart of this happy detail, that ye are Christ's; his property, his subjects his people; and let that engage you to attend to his royal law of charity, by which you may be particularly

f Royal law of charity.] Nothing could have a greater efficacy to put an end to the contemptions, so prevalent among the Christians at Corinth, than the consideration of those high privileges and hopes which were common to them all, as it would tend to sweeten their spirits, and inspire them with honourable and affectionate sentiments with respect to their brethren.
peculiarly known to be his. And as Christ [is] God's and refers all his services as a Mediator, to his Father's glory, it will most effectually pro-
mote that great end of his appearance, that you should learn such a subjection of soul to him, and imbibe those candid and generous sentiments which I am labouring to produce and cherish in your minds.

IMPROVEMENT.

With what delight may the Christian survey this grand in-
ventory, and, conscious that he is Christ's, call all things his own? With what pleasure survey the various gifts and graces of ministers, and consider them as given by God for his edification! With what complacency look round on things present, and for-
ward on things to come, in this connection, and call the world his own; and count not only life, but death, amongst his trea-
sures! Both in their different aspects, are subservient to the happy purpose of glorifying God: and surely, when by death we may do it more effectually, death should be more welcome than life. And welcome it must indeed be to every believer, as the appointed means of transmitting him to the sight and enjoyment of God, and the possession of better blessings, than Paul, or Apollos, could ever describe, or any thing present, or any thing to come in this world, could ever afford.

Let these sublime views elevate the Christian above those occasions of contention, which, for want of ascending to such noble contemplations, are often the source of innumerable evils. And let us add to them that other consideration, that we are the temples of the Holy Ghost; if Christians indeed, we are inhabited by God, even by his Spirit. Let this engage us to take the strictest care, neither to defile ourselves, nor to injure our brethren; lest, in either view, it should be resented and punished by the holy God, as a sacrilegious profanation.

Let us not overvalue the wisdom of this world, since it is little regarded by God; nor be greatly concerned, if fools account our wisdom, folly, and our life, madness. So censured they the prophets, and apostles, before us: nor did our Master himself escape the calumny and outrage. We shall be happy enough, if we approve our fidelity to him, and if we build a wise super-
structure on Christ, as the great, the only Foundation.

Let his ministers especially, be solicitous, that they may not lose the labour of their lives, by choosing unhappily to employ them, in that which will turn to no account, in the great day of
of his appearing. Let them carefully examine their materials. Surely if they have senses spiritually exercised, it cannot be hard to distinguish between the substantial and undoubted doctrines of Christianity, which are as gold, and silver, and precious stones, and those fictitious, or at best, dubious and intricate points, which in comparison with the former, are but wood, and hay, and stubble. And if in urging these, they passionately inveigh against their brethren, and endeavour to bring them into contempt, or suspicion, what do they but cement these combustible materials with sulphur.

O! let the frequent views of that last searching fire, that grand period of all, be much in our thoughts: that day, when not only the works of ministers, but every private person, must, as it were, pass through the flames. May we then be saved, not with difficulty, but with praise and honour! May our works, of what kind soever they are, abide, so as to be found worthy of applause, and through Divine grace receive a distinguished reward.

SECT. VII.

To lay in a farther remedy against the pride and faction so ready to prevail among the Corinthians, the apostle leads them into several useful reflections on the nature of the ministerial office, the final judgment of him who searcheth all hearts, and the obligations they were under to the Divine goodness, for every advantage by which they were distinguished from others. 1 Cor. IV. 1—7.

I CORINTHIANS IV. 1.

I HAVE told you, how rich and happy you are in the Divine donation, in consequence of which all things are yours; and particularly, Paul, and Apollos, and Cephas, with their various gifts and endowments. Learn therefore to form your estimate of us aright; and let a man so account of us, not as the masters of the church, but as the servants of Christ, who are in obedience to his commands, to wait on his family; esteeming it honour and happiness enough, if we approve ourselves as stewards of the mysteries of God; as persons whose business it is, with the sincerest regard to his glory, to dispense that gospel which contains such sublime truths for so many ages concealed from the knowledge of the world. And as for what remains to be done, in the discharge of this office, I hope we shall always remember, that it is demanded.
Ministers are stewards, and should be faithful:

that a man be found faithful.

3 But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment; yea, I judge, not mine own self.

4 For I know nothing by myself, yet am I not hereby justified: but he that judgeth me is the Lord.

5 Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every

a Yet am I not hereby justified. This seems a gentle, but very affecting insinuation, that his opposites, confident as they might seem in their own integrity and safety, would do well to take greater heed, that they were not imposed upon by the deceitfulness of their own hearts.

b Being to light the hidden things of darkness. This is a lively and just insinuation, that under specious forms, his enemies concealed very dark designs, which would not bear the discoveries of that awful day.

c Manifest all the secret counsels of the heart.] This passage also suggests a very solid argument against magnifying one minister above another, namely, that the secret principles of men's actions are unknown; and it is enlarged upon to very good practical purposes; while the apostle, at the same time, takes an opportunity of making a very solemn profession of his own faithfulness, and shewing the boldness he had towards God, and his modesty and candour to men; all which were extremely suitable to the general purposes he had in view.

d Trans-
One teacher, therefore, should not be set up against another.

every one have in the most public manner, that praise from God, before the assembled world, which is proportionable to his real character and conduct.

6 These things, brethren, I have by a very obvious figure transferred to myself, and [to] Apollos\(^d\); mentioning our names, and that of Cephas only, instead of many more, since you know the entire friendship there is among us, and how far the names of most about whom you contend, are inferior to these. And I have done this, not on our own account, as you may easily apprehend, but for your sakes, that you may learn, in attending to what has been said concerning us, distinguished as we are by our office, furniture, and success, not to entertain too high an opinion of yourselves, or others, whom you are most ready to admire, above what is here written\(^5\), and appears reasonable on the principles which have been laid down: that you may not be puffed up for one teacher, and against another; which surely you cannot allow with respect to other teachers, when you see us renouncing all such attachment to ourselves. And indeed this would be very unreasonable, if the distinctions were as great, as you, or they, who have the highest conceit of themselves, can imagine. For allowing all, that self-love and prepossession can wish, let me ask the man who carries it to the greatest height, Who maketh thee to differ [from another] in any furniture, or attainment, whether intellectual, or moral? And what hast thou of any kind which

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\(^d\) Transferred to myself, &c.] Some, and particularly Mr. Locke, have inferred from hence, that not St. Paul, and Apollos, but some other persons, were set up among the Corinthians for heads of parties, for whose names the apostle substituted his own, and that of his most intimate friend; but the learned and judicious Warburton well observes, (Meletem, p. 104.) that it is probable their names were used among some others omitted, and the figure was only this, that the names of St. Paul and Apollos were used to signify themselves, and any others so extolled; and when the apostle would say, how little ministers were in themselves, he chose, out of humility and prudence, rather to take such freedom with himself and his most particular and intimate friend, than with others.

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\(^5\) What is here written.] Fisner. (Obser. Vol. II. p 85.) confirms this interpretation, and produces many instances, in which opinion is used to express, having too high an opinion on one's self. L'Enfant explains it in something of a different sense, "above what scripture warrants."

[\(^\) Whether intellectual, or moral.] I include moral attainments, because the apostle had, in the preceding verses, been speaking of fidelity in the ministry, and he elsewhere in this epistle speaks of obtaining mercy to be faithful, (chap. vii. 25.) and would be understood, as referring, not only to his giving us our faculties, but exciting us to the right use of them, both by external calls and advantages, and by inward impressions of his grace on the heart: though still in a manner suited to our free and rational nature, and which
which thou didst not receive from God, the great Parent of universal good? But if thou hast received [it] all from him, why dost thou boast in the gift of his liberal goodness, as if thou hadst not received [it] from him; but it were originally and essentially thine own? Would you all but seriously reflect upon this, it would teach you humbler sentiments, much more rational in themselves, and on the whole, much more for your credit, as well as comfort.

**IMPROVEMENT.**

**Nothing** can be more conducive to the advantage of Christianity, and by consequence, of the world, whose happiness is so much concerned in its support and success, than that its preachers should consider, and their hearers remember, the nature of their office. They are not lords of God's household and heritage, but Ver. ministers of Christ, whose business it is to promote their Master's honour; stewards of the mysteries, who are to endeavour both to keep and to dispense them with all good fidelity. From their Master therefore may they take all their instructions, and to him let them refer all their administrations. Various judgments will be passed upon them; and they, who will oppose the attempts of some of their brethren to introduce corruption and confusion into his family, will have many an unkind reflection thrown upon them, and experience the severity of censure, for a conduct which merits the justest approbation. But let them learn by this excellent apostle, to be above the judgment of men, and to keep the judgment of the Lord in view; that they may not only be supported under that petulance of their fellow-servants, but may learn to guard against, what is much more dangerous, the treachery of their own hearts, and the flattery of self-love; lest they fondly mistake the voice of prejudice for that of conscience, or in other words, the voice of an erroneous conscience, for that of a conscience well informed.

Let us often recollect the narrow limits of our own knowledge, that we may learn modesty in our censures of each other. He only can judge, who knoweth the heart; and there is a day approaching, which will manifest all its secrets. While others, with which, however some may be distinguished by them, leaves all who choose wrong, without excuse, and admits the exercise of justice; as well as grace, in the final distribution of good and evil. See the paraphrase on chap. iii. 5, which seems very applicable to this clause. Yet as it is certain, the Corinthians chiefly gloriéd in their gifts, and in those of their favourite teachers, I doubt not but it is to those that the apostle chiefly refers in this place, and cannot think that the stress of the controversy relating to this sanctifying influence of Divine grace, does by any means rest on this passage.
St. Paul reminds the Corinthians of their prosperous condition,  

**SECT. VII.**

with a pitiable mixture of arrogance, and ignorance, judge one another, and judge us, let us rather be concerned that we may secure that praise of God, which will be heard and felt by the soul, with the highest rapture, and will silence every echo of human applause, or censure.

**Ver.** To conclude: if it hath pleased God, in any respect, to distinguish us from others, by the gifts or graces which he hath bestowed upon us, let us humbly trace these distinctions to their true source: and instead of indulging the least degree of pride on their account, let us rather be the more humble. For surely the more we receive from God, the more we are indebted and obliged; and the more we are obliged to the Divine goodness, the greater ought our shame and confusion to be, that we have not answered those obligations by more faithful care, and more constant gratitude.

**SECT. VIII**

The Apostle, in order to gain farther upon their affections represents the many hardships and dangers, to which he and his brethren were exposed, in comparison of that easy state in which the Corinthians were: and reminding them at the same time of their particular obligations to him, he warns them not to force him on severities, to the use of which he was very averse. 1 Cor. IV. 8, to the end.

1 Corinthians IV. 8. I HAVE suggested some humbling thoughts to your consideration; but I fear you will have little relish for them, as you seem to indulge yourselves in very different views. Am I not rather to congratulate Christians, whose rank and figure in the world is so much superior to that of many of their brethren, and even of their first apostle too? For now you are full; now you are rich; you enjoy so great a degree of prosperity and plenty, that methinks you have even reigned as kings without us: so happy in a variety

1 Corinthians IV. 8. Now ye are full, now ye are rich, ye have reigned as kings without us; and I would to God ye did

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a You have reigned as kings, &c.] This is a proverbial expression of the most splendid and plentiful circumstances; and some think, when the apostle add, I wish ye did reign, he means, “I wish you had the authority of princes, that ye might shelter and accommodate us amidst all our distresses and afflictions.” But one can hardly think he did indeed wish each of them a prince, of the civil power in their hands. It seems much more probable, that as spiritual objects were so familiar to his mind, he changes the idea in the manner the paraphrase expresses; in which sense it seems that Christians are called priests and kings, (Rev. i. 6;) as it is certain they are called a royal priesthood. (1 Pet. ii. 9;) I cannot think with Mr. L’Enfant, that this refers peculiarly to the factious pastors of the church at Corinth.

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did reign, that we also
might reign with you.

"And wonderfully for
we will Such to
thee held
or persons
walk'
made
the
calvin,
ner
refers
arc
Christ's
gels,
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g the
yearehoi-
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liccvis''
Apol.
which
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I.
La
and
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Christ:
and
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ye
are
and
ye
be
Last
all.] I cannot think, as Els-
er seems to do, that the word ραγα
refers to the low rank which the apostles
held in secular life; or with Messieurs
Calvin, Locke, and L'Enfant, that St.
Paul speaks of himself as the last called
apostle; but that there is a reference to
the Roman custom of bringing forth those
persons on the theatre in the after part of
the day, either to fight with each other,
or with wild beasts, who were appointed
to certain death, and had not that poor
chance of escaping which those brought
forth in the morning had. Compare 1
Such kind of spectacles were so common
in all the provinces, that it is no wonder
we should find such an allusion here. The
word ανθρώπος, exhibited, and ήλιον, a
spectacle on the theatre, have in this con-
nexion a beautiful propriety. The whole
passage is indeed full of high eloquence,
and finely adapted to move their com-
bpassion in favour of those who were so
generously exposing and sacrificing them-
selves for the public good.

a A spectacle—to angels and men.] This
representation is wonderfully pathetic
and sublime; while they considered evil
angels and men as beholding them with all
the malignant, and good angels and men
with all the benevolent passions, it must
have a great tendency to inspire their
minds with the most heroic sentiments.—
Elsner has given an excellent collection
of passages from heathen writers, in which
such a figure is made use of by them.
Who are made a spectacle unto angels and to men.

1 Cor. IV. 10. understandings than your brethren, and think you have found out a political way at once of securing the blessings of the gospel, and escaping its inconveniencies and persecutions. *We are* weak, in presence, in infirmities, and in sufferings: *but ye* are strong, have great confidence in yourselves, and are got above many of those tender alarms and impressions which hearts like ours are subject to, on a variety of occasions; you *are* honourable, adorned with extraordinary gifts, in which you are ready to glory, and many of you set off with circumstances of external distinction; *but we* are poor, despised creatures, treated with contempt wherever we come. For even to this present hour, after all the battles fought, and all the conquests already gained, by the gospel, we are often exposed to circumstances of the extremest want and misery. Sometimes we both hunger and thirst, and amidst our charitable journeys to diffuse the gospel, hardly find entertainment of the plainest kind, to relieve our necessities, or money to purchase it. *And* our clothes are so worn out with travelling, and we are so ill furnished for buying more, that we are often almost naked, not having decent raiment to wear, though we appear so often in public assemblies. *And* in many instances, where our benevolent and important message is heard; instead of being received with due respect, we are insulted, and perhaps buffeted, by the unruly and barbarous mob; and at best, if we now and then meet with a little more hospitable usage, it is but for a very little while; for, whereas you dwell in a rich and magnificent city, we have no certain abode; but are continually removing from one place to another. *And* though we are engaged in a work of so great importance to the souls of men, which might well engross all our time and care; yet such are the circumstances in which we are often placed; that we are obliged in duty and prudence, to labour in some secular calling, working with our own hands; to procure the necessary supports rather contemptible, than graceful, appears in a mean, and perhaps sometime tattered dress, before persons of the highest rank, and yet commanded such attention, and made such impressions.

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*Are naked, &c.* Surely one cannot imagine any more glorious triumph of the truth, than what it gained in these circumstances, when St. Paul, with an impediment in his speech, and a personage
The Apostle writes these things for their warning; supports of the most frugal and parsimonious life. But in the most insolent and provoking manner reviled to our faces, and loaded with every opprobrious name of contempt, we meekly bless and pray for our enemies; being persecuted, we endure it patiently, unable to right and help ourselves. Being blasphemed, and spoken of in the most scandalous, and considering our sacred character, the most impious terms; we only treat that men would more impartially examine our pretensions, that they may entertain more favourable sentiments concerning us; and in the mean time, we freely forgive them their rash and injurious censures. And on the whole, such is the usage we meet with that we are made and treated like the very filth of the world, like the wretches, which being taken from the dregs of the people, are offered to expiatory sacrifices to the infernal deities among the Gentiles, and loaded with curses, affronts and injuries, in the way to the altars, at which they are to bleed: [or like] the refuse of all things to this day, the very sweepings of the streets and stalls, a nuisance to all around us, and fit for nothing but to be trampled upon by the meanest and vilest of mankind.

I do not write these words to shame you, or in any degree to stain your credit with other churches, by such a representation, as if you were unmindful of my sufferings for the gospel; but considering the relation in which we stand to each other, and looking upon you as my beloved sons, I warn [you] of those dangers to which I fear you may be exposed, and of the regard which it is voluntary to pay to those who voluntarily subject themselves to quotations. See also Dr. Ridley's Christian Passover, p. 22. It appears from some of these passages, that when the ashes of these unhappy men were thrown into the sea, these very words were used in the ceremony, γὰρ τὸ ἐρήμων, γὰρ καθάρσει; but the former of these titles was given them, in reference to that original signification of the words, which the paraphrase on the end of the verse expresses. That so wise and ancient a republic as that of Marseilles, originally a Greek colony, should have retained this savage usage, is astonishing; yet Servius expressly asserts it. Sect. in *Necid. Lib. III. Lec. 75.*
so many evils on your account, that you ought surely to be the last to increase their burdens. And I may particularly urge this with respect to myself: for if you have ten thousand instructors in Christ, be they ever so many, or ever so valuable, yet [you have] not many spiritual fathers, for in Christ Jesus I Paul have begotten you by the gospel: I preached it first among you, and was the happy means of your spiritual birth, and all the privileges of God's children which you receive by it. I beseech you therefore [that] with filial piety and duty ye be all imitators of me, keeping strictly to the faith which I taught you, and carefully copying my meekness and humility.

For this reason, that you may be the better able to trace my steps, and may be animated to do it with the greater care, I have sent to you Timothy, who is my beloved son, or dear convert, (Acts xix. 22,) and who, though yet but a young man, is remarkably faithful in the Lord, an excellent Christian, who will be able more perfectly to bring to your remembrance my ways in Christ, as I am everywhere teaching in every church where I come; by which you will perceive, that I do not act partially with respect to you, but proceed on general principles of integrity and prudence, from which I no where allow myself to vary.

Some, I hear, are puffed up in vain and proud confidence, as if, after all I have said, I would not come to you, and I did not dare to appear in a place where I have now so many opposers. But they are extremely mistaken, for I will certainly come to you, and that quickly too, if the Lord, who holds the reins of universal government in his hands, permit: and I will then know and examine, not the confident speech, and florid talk of those that are thus puffed up, but the power they have to vindicate their pretensions, and what miraculous proof they can give of that authority in the church which they presume to oppose to mine. For the kingdom of God is not in speech, in confident assertions, or in elegant forms of address, but is established in the exertions of a miraculous power, conferred on the true and genuine apostles of our Lord by the effusion of his Spirit upon them, by virtue of which, his faithful subjects may be fully satisfied they act according to his will, in paying them

15 For though you have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel.

16 Wherefore I beseech you, be ye followers of me.

17 For this cause have I sent unto you Timothy, who is my beloved son, and faithful in the Lord, who shall bring you into remembrance of my ways which be in Christ, as I teach every where in every church.

18 Now some are puffed up as though I would not come to you.

19 But I will come to you shortly, if the Lord will, and will know, not the speech of them which are puffed up, but the power.

20 For the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power.
them the regard they require. What therefore do you on the whole desire, and choose? Then I should come to you, as it were, with a rod of correction in my hand, using my apostolic power for your chastisement; or, which for your sakes I should much rather choose, in love, and in the spirit of meekness and gentleness, comforting and commending, instead of chastising? You will, I hope, think seriously upon the matter in time, before things are driven to such an extremity, as may not any longer leave it my choice or yours.

IMPROVEMENT.

How adorable is the efficacy of Divine grace which bore those zealous and faithful servants of Christ through all their labours and fatigues, when they were made a spectacle to the world, to angels and men! How glorious a spectacle! worthy surely, as any thing, since that wonderful scene on Calvary, of the eye of God himself.

How little are we to judge of the Divine favour by external circumstances, when those best of men were of all others the most miserable, farther, than as they were supported and animated them? And when that is taken into the account, who would not emulate their lot, though hungry and thirsty, though naked and destitute, without habitation, without protector, without friends? When we consider their share in the Divine friendship, when we consider the blessed effects of their labours, and the glorious crown which awaits them after all their sufferings; surely they must appear happy in proportion to the degree in which they seemed miserable, and glorious in proportion to the degree in which the world held them as infamous!

That illustrious person, whose epistles are now before us, knew not the pleasures of domestic life, in many of its most endearing relations.

[With a rod of correction.] That the apostles had often a miraculous power of inducing death, and other temporal judgments, in case of aggravated offence, appears from other passages of scripture. Acts 5:10, chap. xiii. 10, 11; 1 Tim. i. 20; and is referred to more than once or twice, in these epistles to the Corinthians, 1 Cor. v. 2; 2 Cor. i. 27, chap. vi. 8, chap. xiii. 2, 3, 10. And I cannot mention these passages, without leading my reader to reflect on the wisdom of Providence, in permitting such opposition to arise against St. Paul, particularly at Corinth. It gave him an opportunity of making the strongest appeals to what they are supposed to know of his miraculous power; and had these appeals not been indeed founded on the most certain and evident truth, they must, instead of restoring him to their regards, as we find in fact they did, have been sufficient of themselves utterly to have ruined all his reputation and interest among them, had it before been ever so great.
The Apostle proceeds to the case of the incestuous person,

relations. But God made him a spiritual father to multitudes; and no doubt, as he urges the consideration on his children in Christ, he felt the joy arising from it strong in his own soul, when he said I have begotten you in Christ Jesus in the gospel. Surely it ought never to have been forgotten by them; and if through the artifices of ill-designing men, and the remaining infirmities of their own character, it was sometimes, and in some degree forgotten now, yet undoubtedly, it would be remembered by them in the heavenly world for ever; even by as many as the Lord his God had graciously given him. And if there be any remembrance there, that they once grieved him, it will be an engagément to all those offices of an eternal friendship, which the exaltation of the heavenly state shall allow. In the mean time, his paternal affection for them wrought, not in a foolish fondness of indulgence, which in the language of Divine wisdom, is hating a son; but in the character of a prudent and faithful parent, who, desirous that his children may be as wise and good as possible, will rather use the rod than suffer them to be undone. Yet when he speaks of using it, he speaks with regret, as one who would rather chuse to act in the spirit of gentleness, and without any mixture of severity how necessary soever. The whole of his subsequent conduct to the Corinthians, as far as it may be learned from this, or the following epistle, bears a perfect consistency with these expressions, and illustrates their sincerity.

May God give to his ministers more of this truly apostolical spirit, more of those overflows of holy love, attempering and atempered by that ardent zeal against sin, and that firm resolution in the discharge of duty, which shone so brightly in the apostle and in which he so freely and justly recommends himself to the imitation of his children and his brethren.

SECT. IX.

The Apostle proceeds to mention the irregularities which prevailed in the Corinthian church; and here handled the case of the incestuous person, whom he commands them to separate from their communion. 1 Cor. V. 1, to the end.

1 Corinthians V. 1.

I HAVE spoken of coming to you with a rod of correction; and it is too probable I may be laid under a necessity of using it, though it be an unwilling necessity. For it is generally reported*, [that there is] a kind of lewdness among

* Generally reported.] Dr. Whitby thinks, that the scandalous stories that were generally told among the heathen, of the incestuous practices of primitive Christians, had
as is not so much as named amongst the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife.

2 And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed, might be taken away from among you.

3 For verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already, as though I were present concerning him that hath so done this deed;

4 In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, had their original from the misrepresentation of this fact. Many quotations, brought by this learned author, and others, on this text shew, that incest was held in high abomination among the heathen; and an enormity of this kind is, as is well called by Cicero, Seduc, incredibile & inaudium, on incredible and unheard of wickedness. See also Grat. de Jure Bel. & Pac. Lib. II. Cap. v. § 14, No. 2

b Criminal converse.] Probably some father had parted with his wife, perhaps provoked by her indiscretion, and his son, to whom she was mother-in-law, had married her; for by 2 Cor. vii. 12, it seems probable, the person injured was yet alive.

c Present in spirit.] Some think this refers to an extraordinary gift which St. Paul had of discerning clearly and circumstantially what was done at a distance. Compare Col. ii. 5; 2 Kings v. 26, chap. vi. 12. See Dr. Benson's Hist. Vol. II. p. 16.
such a distance, and being ready to add awful efficacy and sanction to your censure. Do, by a public and express act, deliver such an one by name to Satan, to be by him, as the terrible executioner of the Divine justice and displeasure, chastised and tormented, in order to the destruction of the flesh, that, for this shameful indulgence of its lascivious appetites and desires, it may be emaciated and enfeebled, and the offender, alarmed by sufferings of so extraordinary and formidable a nature, if possible, may be brought to true repentance and humiliation, that so the immortal spirit may be saved, in the day of the Lord Jesus, from those infinitely more insupportable and everlasting agonies to which it might otherwise be doomed.

And give me leave on this occasion farther to tell you, that your boasting, whether of such a person as your friend, if he be remarkable for any peculiar distinction in gifts, abilities and circumstances, or against him, as your enemy, if he be of an opposite faction, [is] not by any means good. Do you not know, in a familiar instance, which it may be profitable for you to recollect, that a little leaven quickly diffuses itself by a secret fermentation, till it leaveneth the whole mass. Thus will evil examples tend to spread in the church; and if a brand of infamy be not quickly set upon the incorrigible offender, wickedness will grow familiar, and lose its horror; so that many other members of your society may be polluted, ensnared and dishonoured. Set yourselves therefore with a resolution and diligence, like that which the Jews shew in all their dwellings, when the annual feast of the passover is approaching, to purge out the leaven: search for it, as it were, with lighted candles, wherever you suspect any of it to lurk unobserved, that ye may indeed be entirely

5 To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

6 Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?

7 Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ

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a To deliver such an one to Satan, &c. Some think that, as Satan is considered as the head of all who are not under Christ as their head, that is, in the church of Christ, every one, who was cut off from the church, must of course be delivered over to Satan; but it seems much more reasonable to believe, that this refers to the infliction of some bodily pain or disease, in which Satan might act as the instrument of the Divine justice. Compare 1 Tim. i. 20, and this was for the destruction of the flesh, not directly of the fleshly principle, for in that sense it could not be opposed to the saving the spirit in the day of the Lord; but probably as the phrase intimates; for the emaciating and enfeebling the powers of animal nature.

b Your boasting is not good.] L'Enfant would read it interrogatively, Have you not a sin subject for boasting? which is indeed more illustrated than our version; but I think, not in the taste and manner of St. Paul, nor does it seem exactly to suit the original.
Christ our passover was slain for us.

tirely a new mass: as ye are by your Christian profession unleavened, let there be no mixture of any thing inconsistent with that simplicity and purity which the gospel teaches.

It is a diligence and resolution that becomes you; for we have not only the Divine command to enforce it, but this tender additional obligation that even Christ our passover was slain for us. He hath made his precious blood the price of our redemption, that he might make it the means of our sanctification, and that we instead of being smitten by the sword of the avenging angel, might sit down to a divine banquet in peace. Let us then keep the holy feast which he hath at such an expence provided for us, and in which he feedeth us even with his own flesh; and let us celebrate it in a manner which may do him the greatest honour, and be most pleasing to the adorable Author of our liberty and our happiness; that is, not with the old stale leaven of uncleanness, so common in your Gentile estate, nor with the leaven of malignity and mischief, which your Judaizing teachers would infuse, though it is as inconsistent with the benevolence, as the other with the purity of the gospel: but avoiding these with the strictest care, keep it with the unleavened [bread] of sincerity and truth: with the most simple and sincere desire of knowing and practising every branch of our duty; which if we really have, it will keep us from all these evils, and secure an uniformity of behaviour, honourable to our profession, and agreeable to the glorious scheme and design of its illustrious Author.

In this connection it occurs to me, and I conclude you remember, that I wrote to you an epistle which I sent you before your messengers reached me, that you should not converse with fornicators and lewd persons, or others of ill

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1 Christ our passover was slain. It is well known, that Justin Martyr, in his dialogue with Trypho the Jew, accuses the Jews with having taken out of the book of Esdras the following words. "The passover is our Savour, and our refuge."

1. Enfant thinks these words of St. Paul are an allusion to them. It is a very inconclusive inference of some from this context, that this epistle was written about the time of the passover. Compare chap. xvi. 8.

2. [Lewd persons.] I have rendered παραδείκτοι, lewd persons in these verses, as I think it very plain the apostle intended the word should be taken in that extent; his argument concluding yet more strongly against some other species of lewdness, than against what is called simple fornication, detestable as that is.
And not to eat with such an one, if called a brother.

fame and character. But I think you must apprehend, that by what I then wrote, I intended not entirely to forbid all converse with the lewd people of this world, or with covetous men, or extortioners, or idolaters, among your heathen neighbours; for then, as these characters so generally prevail among mankind in this degenerate state, you must indeed go out of the world, and seek some solitary abode in the wilderness; which is what I never intended to require or encourage. But the intent of what I then said, and of what I have now written unto you, is, that if any who is named a Christian brother be evidently a lewd person, or remarkably covetous, or in acts of occasional, though not stated and customary worship, an idolater, or even a raider, who labours to provoke others by foul language, and insulting behaviour, or injure any in their absence by slanderous reports, or a drunkard, and in any other respects, an abandoned sensualist, or a rapacious extortioner, you should not converse familiarly, or so much as eat with such an one, in common life, and much less, in such religious solemnities as are peculiar to the church of Christ, which ought ever to be a pure and holy society.

You must understand my caution with such a limitation as this: for what have I to do, as a Christian apostle, to judge those that are without the pale of the church? Of others indeed I may speak; for do not even you, in your more private capacity, judge those that are within? I have taught you, that every private Christian should be concerned in his station to maintain the discipline of the church of Christ, and to hear his testimony against disorderly walkers,

which may at present have a place in it. But let it be remembered, that those who are without, God judgeth; and he will find a way, sooner or later, to testify his awful displeasure against them for crimes which they have committed against the law of nature, and that acquaintance with it which he knows they actually had, or might have attained. Therefore in consideration of this, both in one view, and the other, let it be your immediate care, as you regard the

10 Yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners or with idolaters; for then must ye go out of the world.

11 But now I have written unto you, not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a raider, or a drunkard, or an extortioner, with such an one no not to eat.

12 For what have I to do to judge them also that are without? do not ye judge them that are within?

13 But them that are without, God judgeth. Therefore put away from among you—

b Those who are without, God judgeth.] Dr. Warburty thinks this is an oblique reference to the mother-in-law of the inconstant person who was a heathen; which, from the apostle's giving no directions concerning her is not improbable. But I think, the views of St. Paul in this clause, were more extensive, and have paraphrased them accordingly.

The
the peace of the church, and the safety of your own souls, speedily, and with all due solemnity to take away from among yourselves the wicked person. I have mentioned, and any others, whose character may, like his, be scandalous and infectious.

IMPROVEMENT.

HAPPY are those churches who have it in their power to exercise godly discipline, and to chase from their communion such members as are its reproach and scandal! Happy they, who having this power, have the courage and fidelity to use it, so as not to be ashamed and condemned by it. Let us not be too much surprised, that offences come, and if there are, even in Christian societies, some enormities beyond what are commonly heard of among the Gentiles. It is no wonder, if such abandon themselves, yea, if they are in righteous judgment abandoned of God, to the uncontrollable rage of their own lusts and corruptions, and the great enemy of souls be suffered to carry them captive at his pleasure. Let it however be our concern, that when this is the case, the wicked person be taken away. And though the extraordinary power which the apostles had, be long ceased, and we cannot deliver over offenders for correction to Satan, as they did, let us take such methods as are still open, for purging the old leaven out of our churches; and O, that we may be enabled to purge it out of our hearts! remembering Christ our Passover, who was slain for us, feeding daily upon him by faith, and keeping the sacred festival, at once with joy and gladness, and with simplicity and sincerity of heart.

Lamentable indeed is it that so many vices should prevail in human nature; that he, who would avoid all society with persons of a bad character, must needs go out of the world. But most lamentable of all, that any one who is called a brother, should be a fornicator, or covetous, an idolator, or raider, a drunkard, or an extortioner. May God preserve us from such detestable crimes; and may he purge out all such spots as these from our feasts of charity! and to that end, may he quicken our zeal to bear a testimony against them, in every such method as suits our relation and circumstances of life! Above all, let not any ever imagine, that being joined in communion with a Christian church, can excuse

1 Take away, &c.] This seems plainly to imply that the Corinthians had a power of re-communion in themselves, as has generally been pleaded by congregational writers from this text.
The saints shall judge the world.

Sect. IX.

The Apostle reproves the Corinthians for prosecuting their brethren in heathen courts; and solemnly warns them of the sad consequences which would attend the indulgence of those criminal dispositions and practices in which Christianity found them, and from which it was intended to deliver them. 1 Cor. VI. 1-11.

I Corinthians VI. 1.

I have already mentioned one very great irregularity among you; and now I am under an unhappy necessity of animadverting upon another; which is, that you enter into suits of law with each other in heathen courts. And is this possible? Dare any of you indeed act so shameful a part? Can you really be so imprudent, having any matter of complaint against another, as to refer it to the decision of men, who lie under so many temptations to be unjust, and not of the saints', of your Christian brethren, from whose sanctity of character and profession you might reasonably expect the most equitable usage, and the utmost tenderness in accommodating differences, upon the easiest terms that justice will allow. Do you not yet indeed know, have you never been told it by me, or by any other, that the saints shall in the great day judge the world? that they shall be assessors with Christ in that solemn judgment when he shall condemn all the ungodly? (Compare Matt. XIX.

a [Unjust—saints.] The heathen judges, as Paul seems here to intimate, or rather in effect to declare, were generally unjust; Christians were generally good, righteous, and holy men. There might be exceptions on each side, but the apostle's argument turns on what might commonly be supposed. The saints, who are to judge angels, are not merely professing Christians. To suppose, that the case of the incestuous Corinthian had been carried before a heathen judge, as Mr. Locke supposes, seems entirely groundless. A thousand other disputes might have occasioned the remonstrance before us.

b Shall
unworthy to judge the smallest matters?

5 Know ye not, that we shall judge angels? how much more things that pertain to this life.

If then ye have judgments of things pertaining to this life, set them to judge who are least esteemed in the church.

I speak to your shame.

b Shall judge angels.] Had the apostle as Dr. Whitby supposed, referred to the power which many Christians had of driving out demons from those who were possessed by them, he would not have spoke of this as a future thing, nor can we suppose it to have been common to all Christians, nor would it have afforded an argument equally forcible with that which the paraphrase suggests. Mr. Reynolds extends the interpretation yet farther, and seems to infer from it, that the holy angels are still in a state of probation, and shall be rewarded at the last day, according to the degree of their fidelity and activity in the services assigned to them by Christ, as the head of angels, who shall take his redeemed from among men, to be assessors with him in that final sentence. Reg. of Ang. p. 135. But the angelic legions are represented in quite another view, namely, as ministering to Christ, adding pomp to his appearance, and executing his sentence; which, I think, sufficiently proves that this is an in-grounded interpretation, and that if any such judgment is to pass, with regard to them, it must be at some other time, and in some other place. But there seems a peculiar dignity and propriety in this determination of the great God, that when the devils, who are expressly said to be reserved in chains of darkness to the judgment of the great day, shall be condemned, the saints, being raised to the seats of glory which these wicked spirits have forfeited and lost, should assist in that sentence which shall display the victory of Christ over them in these his servants, once their captives, and will, no doubt, render the sentence itself yet more intolerable, to creatures of such malignity and pride.

c Do ye set them, &c.] Our translation renders it, set them to judge, who are least esteemed in the church, as if the apostle had said, “take the meanest Christian, rather than any heathen.” But I follow that preferred by Beza and Whitby. Limborch would understand ἀξιότεροι, as equivalent to ἐξωτερικόν, and render it as a piece of advice, “constitute to yourselves courts of judicature, relating to civil affairs.”—Flucker shows, that ξαβίνω, signifies to place persons on judicial seats. 

And should not be judged by persons not esteemed in the church: 605

xix. 28.) And if the world is shortly to be judged by you, are ye unworthy of determining the most inconsiderable matters which daily occur in your secular affairs?

I repeat it again; and you will find a striking argument, if you will allow yourselves to reflect upon it; know you not, that we shall judge even the fallen angels themselves, who, notwithstanding all their malignity and pride, shall be brought to that tribunal at which you, having gloriously passed your own trial, shall be seated with Christ, your victorious Lord, when by his righteous sentence he shall send these rebellious spirits to that flaming prison which Divine justice hath prepared for them. And [are ye] not then much more apparently [worthy to judge] the little trifling affairs which relate to this mortal life? If therefore ye, who have such great honours and dignities in view, have, in the mean time, any little controversies with each other, relating to the affairs of this life, do ye set those to determine them, who are of no esteem at all in the church, but whom ye know to be idolators, despisers of the gospel, and enemies to your great Master, and his cause, as your heathen neighbours undoubtedly are? I speak to your shame; and hope you blush while you

\[\text{Vol. II. p. 93.}\]
The apostle therefore reproves their contests in the heathen court.

1 Cor. VI. 5.

1. sect. x.

you read it. Are things indeed come to such a pass in your church, celebrated as it is, and boasting so much of its wisdom, that this should be necessary? What is there not one wise intelligent person among you all, who may be able to determine the cause of a Christian brother. But though the civil constitution allows you to decide these things among yourselves, one brother hath a suit against another, and this before infidels, who cannot but be greatly scandalized at this, and take occasion from your mutual quarrels and accusations, to brand the whole body of you as injurious and avaricious; who, while you pretend to be so far superior to secular views, are yet so strongly attached to them, that with all your professions of universal benevolence and brotherly love, you cannot forbear wronging one another? Therefore, whoever may have the right on his side, on this or that particular question, even this is altogether a fault among you, that you bring it under the cognizance of heathens on whatever occasion it be, that ye have such law-suits and contests with each other. Why do ye not rather endure wrong patiently, and sit down by the loss? Why do ye not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded, than seek such a remedy as this? But indeed, to speak plainly, you do wrong, and you defraud even [your] brethren. By such proceedings as these, you do much greater injury to the church of Christ, and the common cause of religion than you can sustain from any particular brother against whom you advance a complaint. Nor is this the only thing wherein you are to blame, nor the only instance in which you injure each other.

And permit me to expostulate with you a little on this head, What! can you contentedly sacrifice this great and glorious hope which the gospel gives you? With all your boasted knowledge, do you not indeed know that the unjust shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived, shame. Is it so, that there is not a wise man among you? no not one that shall be able to judge between his brethren?

6 But brother goeth to law with brother, and that before the unbelievers.

7 Know therefore there is utterly a fault among you, because ye go to law one with another: why do ye not rather take wrong? why do ye not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded?

8 Nay, ye do wrong and defraud, and that your brethren.

9 Know ye not, that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters,
ed by a vain imagination, that the Christian name and privileges will secure you in the practice of your vices; for I now solemnly assure you, as I have often done, that neither fornicators, nor adulterers, nor effeminate persons, who give themselves up to a soft indolent way of living, and can endure no hardships in the way of duty and honour; nor Sodomites, those infamous degraders of human nature. Nor thieves, nor those who are insatiable covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, who by extortion, or any other kind of violence, invade the property of their neighbours: shall inherit that pure and peaceful region, the kingdom of God, where holiness and love must for ever reign, under the auspicious government of his Son.

And while I write this, excuse me, that I think it my duty solemnly, though tenderly, to call you, my dear brethren, to recollect, that such detested creatures as these, were some of you in your unconverted state! as many of your neighbours know, and as you yourselves, with deep humility and agony of soul confessed. But ye are washed, not merely by the baptism of water; but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified, Divine grace has made a happy change in your state and temper; and ye are purified and renewed, as well as dis-charged from the condemnation to which ye were justly obnoxious, in the name of our Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of him whom we are now taught, through that common Saviour, to call with complacency our God. You ought therefore ever to maintain the most grateful sense of this important blessing, to stand at the remotest distance from sin, and to be tender of the peace and honour of a society which God hath founded by his extraordinary interposition, and into which he hath been pleased in so wonderful a manner to bring even you, who were once in the most infamous and deplorable state.

IMPROVEMENT.

Alas! How great a reproach do we bring on our Christian profession, by so immoderate an attachment to our secular interest! How much does the family of our common Father suffer, while brother goes to law with brother! What are these little interests of mortal life, that the heirs of salvation, by whom angels
are to be judged, should wrangle about them, and for the sake of them do wrong, and that even to their brethren!

Vcr. Men had need, where such a temper prevails, to examine themselves, and take heed that they be not deceived; for though good men may fall into some degrees of this evil, through negligence or mistake, yet certainly it looks too much like the character of such of whom the apostle testifies, that they shall not inherit the kingdom of God. Let us observe, that in this catalogue are contained, not only the most infamous and enormous offenders, but some, who perhaps may be tempted, because of their freedom from flagitious crimes, to think much better of themselves than they ought. We find here the effeminate, and covetous, and revilers, and extortioners, ranked with adulterers, and fornicators, with thieves and drunkards, with idolaters and Sodomites. We can never be secure from danger of falling into the greatest sins, till we learn to guard against the least; or rather, till we think no evil small; viewing every sin in its contradiction to the nature of God, and in the sad aspect it wears with regard to an eternal state.

But how astonishing is it to reflect, that when the apostle is speaking of persons of such infamous characters, he should be able to add, in his address to his Christian brethren at Corinth, And such were some of you! Who must not adore the riches and sovereignty of Divine grace? were such as these the best of the heathen world? were such as these prepared by their distinguished virtues to receive farther assistance? let us rather pay our homage to that grace, which went, as it were, into the suburbs of hell, to gather from thence citizens of heaven. And let the worst of men learn, not to despair of salvation, when made sincerely desirous of being washed and sanctified, as well as justified, in the name of our Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God. It is that name, it is that Spirit alone, which accomplishes works like these. And blessed be God, all the wonders of this kind were not exhausted in those early ages, but some have been reserved for us, on whom the end of the world is come; the gospel hath exerted its triumphs in our own days, and they shall be renewed in those of our children. Only let none from hence presume to turn the grace of God into wantonness; lest instead of being among the few, who are made the trophies of the Divine mercy, they should perish with the multitude of the ungodly world, who die in their pollutions, and go down to final and irreversible condemnation.

SECT.
Whereas some among the newly converted Corinthians, might not be sufficiently sensible of the enormity of the sin of fornication, the Apostle, after some useful reflections on things really indifferent, expresses himself strongly on that head, and pleads those views peculiar to Christianity, which especially illustrate the heinousness of it. 1 Cor. VI. 12, to the end.

1 CORINTHIANS, VI. 12.

I KNOW, some of you at Corinth, allow yourselves to philosophize with great liberty, and find many excuses for doing things which others conscientiously scruple; but as matters at present stand, I think it necessary to give you some cautions upon this head. Suppose the things in question to be as indifferent in their own nature, as many of you would fain persuade yourselves and others, they are: I will, for argument sake, grant, that all these things are lawful for me; but at the same time you must acknowledge, if you reflect ever so little, that all such things are not convenient: circumstances may make it improper for me to do that which is not absolutely and universally criminal. And though it be allowed, that all things in question are lawful for me, nevertheless, I will not be brought under the power of any such thing. But am solicitous to maintain such a superiority to appetite and passion, as becomes a man and a Christian in these cases. This maxim may particularly be applied to the supposed difference between one kind of food and another. All meats, capable of ministering to our nourishment, [are] indifferently made, for the use of the belly, and the belly is made for receiving and digesting meats. It is true; but then it ought to be remembered, that the time will quickly come, when God will destroy both it and them; meats, and the organs by which they have been received, and this animal frame, which has been nourished by them, shall be mixed together in the grave, and moulded into dust. Since therefore they refer only to this mortal body, so soon to be reduced to its first mean principles, it is certainly beneath the dignity of the Christian character to be a slave to this or that kind of

13 Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats; but God shall destroy both it and them.
Much less would he allow fornication; of meat; or in any instances, to indulge this perishing flesh, so as to injure the souls of others, or hazard our own.

But if any man extend the maxim I have mentioned above, to patronize any kind of lewdness, it would be a groundless and most unjustifiable inference: for it is most certain, that the body is not made for so infamous a purpose as fornication, nor can the commission of it be ever necessary or expedient; but it was, on the contrary, formed for the service of the Lord, that, while we continue in it, we might devote all our animal, as well as rational powers, to our great Creator and Redeemer; and the Lord is in an important sense for the body, he is the great Saviour of the body, as well as of the soul, and will make it at last appear, that he hath not forgotten the meaner part of our nature, in the gracious scheme he hath formed for our felicity:

And this scheme shall surely be effectual; for God the Father hath both raised up the Lord, Jesus Christ, from the dead to an immortal life; and will also raise us up, in like manner, by his Divine and almighty power, and transform these bodies of our, into a resemblance of the glorified body of our Lord; which should certainly raise us above all impure affections and desires, and engage us to live in the body, in some conformity to so divine and glorious a hope.

Enter, I beseech you, into the thought; and let me expostulate freely with those who are ready to forget it. Know ye not indeed, that, as your bodies make an essential part of yourselves, they are to be considered as members of Christ, belonging, as it were, to his body, and in that view under his care, as to their final and everlasting happiness with him. Shall I then take these which I am taught to look upon as in an important sense the members of Christ, and prostitute them to so infamous a purpose, as to make them the members of an harlot by unlawful embraces? God forbid! It is a thing not to be thought of, without the utmost abhorrence and indignation. What, know ye not, that he who is thus joined to an harlot, is one body with her? For say [The Divine oracles] speaking of that conjunction which whoredom prostitutes to the dishonour of matrimony, so wisely and graciously ordained by God, (Gen. ii. 24,) they two, that is, the man and his wife, shall be one flesh. But

them. Now the body is not for fornication, but for the Lord; and the Lord for the body.

And God hath both raised up the Lord, and will also raise us up by his own power.

Know ye not, that your bodies are the members of Christ, shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid.

What, know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot, is one body? for two (saith he,) shall be one flesh.
For our bodies are the members of Christ.

But the that is joined unto the Lord, is one spirit.

18 Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth, is without the body; but he that committeth fornication, sinneth against his own body.

19 What! know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own.

a Every [other] sin, &c. It would be unreasonable to insist on the most rigorous interpretation of these words; but the general sense is plain and true, and I suppose, that on the whole, there is no other sin by which the body receives equal detriment, considering not only its nature, but how much it has prevailed.

b He that committeth whoredom, sinneth against his own body.] This is well illustrated by a fine passage of Xenophon, produced by Raphelius here, in which Socrates is represented as saying, "that intemperate men hurt themselves far more than others; whereas other sinners secure some profit to themselves, though they are injurious to others."—It is evident, that παιγμα must here signify any unlawful commerce between persons of different sexes, since whoredom with married women is as directly contrary both to the honour and health of the body, as with single.
to seek your present gratification without control, or regard to the will of a superior.

For the contrary is most apparent; ye are bought with a price, and that infinitely beyond what you can pretend to be worth. Therefore, far from doing any thing to bring a dishonour on religion, you ought in every action, word, and sentiment, to own yourselves his property, and exert yourselves to the utmost, in a course of vigorous and constant obedience, to glorify God, both with your body and with your spirit, which are, by the justest title, God's; as he hath not only created, preserved, and maintained you, but by the invaluable blood of his Son purchased and redeemed you to himself, and by his holy Spirit taken possession of you, and marked you for his own.

IMPROVEMENT.

How peculiar is the excellence of the Christian religion! With what incomparable advantages doth it inforce all the lessons of moral virtue, which it teaches! With what holy disdain should we look on the baits of sense, and the pollutions which are in the world through lust, if we seriously and often reflected on these two things—That our bodies are the members of Christ, and that they are the temples of the Holy Ghost! Let it be our care, that they may not be nominally, but really so. That we may by a living faith be united to the Lord, so as to become one spirit with him, animated by that Spirit which resides in him and dwells in all who are truly his.

Let us, as often as we are tempted to alienate ourselves from the service of God, reflect upon the price with which we are bought. How great, how important a price, which we should never think of but with secret shame, as well as admiration and love! O Lord! hast thou paid such a ransom for me, and shall I act as if I thought even this not enough? as if thou hadst acquired only a partial and imperfect right to me, and I might divide myself between thee and strangers, between thee and thine enemies? O may we be entirely thine! and make it the business of the latest day and hour of our lives, to glorify God with our bodies and with our spirits, which are his!

Under the influence of this thought, may we effectually enter into the wise and pious suggestions of the apostle; and guard, not only against things absolutely and universally unlawful, but likewise against those, which, in present circumstances, may be inconvenient.
Reflections on our obligations to purity, &c.

convenient. May we be ever ready to exert a holy freedom of soul, and a superiority to whatever may ensnare and enslave us; which we shall more easily obtain, if we reflect on the transitory duration of the objects of appetite and sense: how soon the things we enjoy, and those bodies by which we enjoy them, shall be reduced to the dust, out of which they were taken. God destroys all that is present and visible, that we may look more intensely for a kingdom that cannot be moved. He reduces our bodies to putrefaction, that we may learn to cultivate with greater care the interest of a never-dying soul: which if we faithfully and diligently pursue, God who hath raised up his Son as our Surety and Saviour, will also raise us up by his own power, to enjoyments, sublime, incorruptible, and eternal. O Lord! we would wait for thy salvation, and in the mean while, would do thy commandments; and animated by so exalted a hope, would purify ourselves, even as thou art pure.

END OF THE THIRD VOLUME.